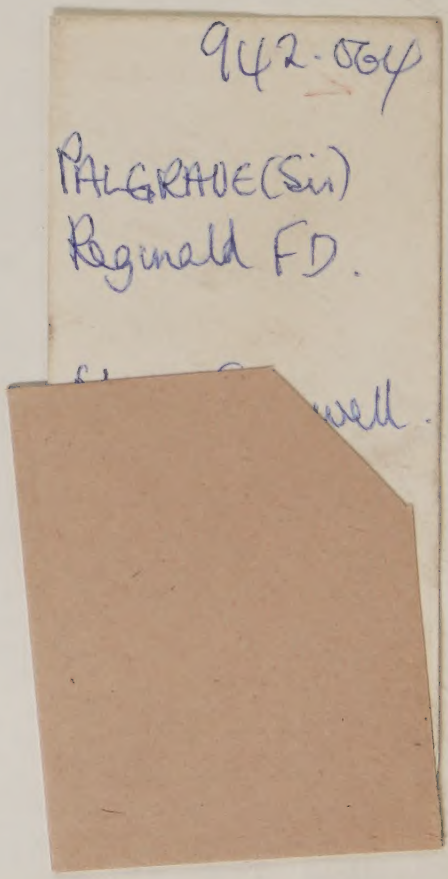
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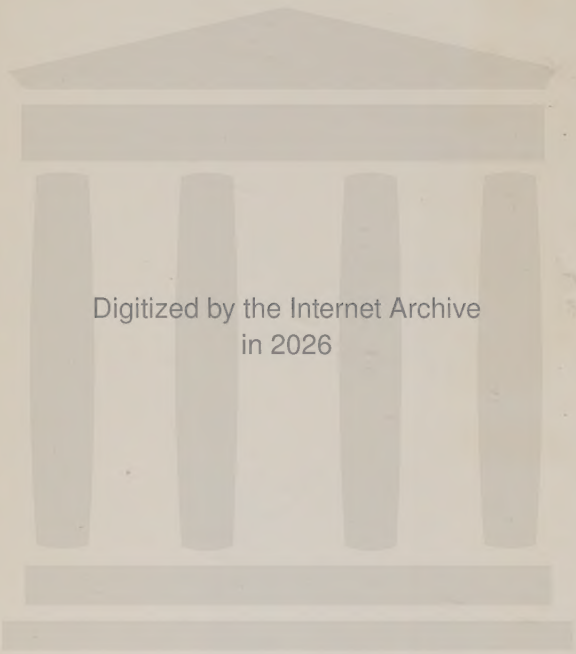
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OLIVER CROMWELL

H.H. THE LORD PROTECTOR

AND THE ROYALIST INSURRECTION AGAINST HIS GOVERNMENT OF MARCH, 1655

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AND THE ROYALIST INSURRECTION AGAINST HIS GOVERNMENT OF MARCH, 1655

A relation of the part taken therein by the Protector, of the way in which his subjects regarded him and the Insurrection, and of the causes and consequences thereof

BY

SIR REGINALD F. D. PALGRAVE, K.C.B.

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PREFACE

SOME words of explanation, if not of justification, are desirable regarding the object and the basis of this brief historical monograph. Its object is to exhibit Oliver Cromwell as the fosterer of the Insurrection against his Government which took place during March, 1655, an event of which the occupation of Salisbury for a few hours by a troop of Royalists formed the most conspicuous feature. This representation of the Protector is wholly based on contemporary evidence, and especially on the outspoken descriptions of his own conduct, and of the way in which his conduct was regarded by his subjects, that Cromwell addressed to Parliament (p. 52) and to the Army officers (p. 6). From the same sources indications are derived showing the interacting circumstances which compelled Cromwell to carry out an act of State policy otherwise inexplicable.

From the sayings and writings of the men of the time a notion also may be gathered of the pregnant influences which sprang from the Insurrection; and it will be found that those influences overshadowed the whole subsequent career of the Protectorate, and have

affected the history of our land down to the present day.

"We are apt," Cromwell tells us, "to boast sometimes that we are Englishmen";[1] and, as one of the incitements to that boast is the right to claim fellowship with Oliver Cromwell, the exhibition of such an Englishman as deceiver-general of his subjects must be a painful task. It is not, however, undertaken, again using Cromwell's words, to "give" his admirers "some wormwood to bite upon";[2] nor to belittle a man who was our true Protector, who devoted his life, and even sacrificed it, to protect England from anarchy and bloodshed. My sole aim, whilst striving to be a writer who seeks "not to form or accommodate, but to state things as he finds them," lies in a hope that historical research may be quickened by a disclosure of the hopeless circumstances and miserable consequences which beset Oliver Cromwell whilst he endeavoured to act (and he could truthfully make the claim) as "a good constable set to keep the peace of the Parish."[3]

To these comments on the object and the origin of this essay, some explanatory words of a semi-personal note may be added. Exclusive reliance on contemporary evidence is attended by this disadvantage. The inquirer may be led, as has happened on the present

[1] Burton's "Diary," ii. 363.
[2] Morley, "Oliver Cromwell," p. 306.
[3] Carlyle, iv. 222.

occasion, far away from the track laid down by his historical predecessors into a course that tends towards a complete divergence from the views which they have authorised; and conclusions unstamped with the hall-mark of the masters of the schools of history are, naturally enough, not readily acceptable.

That this is the case I received, now many years ago, very sufficient warning. Instructed by D'Ewes's MS. Diary of the opening years of the Long Parliament, and by other contemporary evidence, I ventured to retell "The story of the death of Thomas, Earl of Strafford,"[1] in a fashion which did not at all harmonise with the established expositions of that event; and, still more venturesome, I sent the essay to the editor of "The Edinburgh Review." In due course he delivered his verdict: it was unhesitatingly unfavourable. The article was rejected, and for this reason. Rising with innate and editorial dignity, the editor impressively waved his hand towards the histories of England all in a row along the book-shelves, and said that he could not find in that goodly company any confirmation of the conclusions which I endeavoured to establish. A rejoinder that it was the "continual plodder" who sought to win "base authority from others' books" would have been out of place, if not quite out of the question; nor did the subsequent publication of the essay produce any reversal of that discouraging decision. And as my ineffective effort

[1] "Fraser's Mag.," April, 1873.

to deal with Strafford's fate and this effort bear an inevitable family likeness, and as this is by no means a first attempt on my part to show that Cromwell had a hand in the Insurrection of March, 1655,[1] the accuracy of the editor's discernment may, even in a succeeding century, receive yet more complete confirmation.

The justification for this re-renewed effort lies in the acquisition of evidence, which directly connects Cromwell with the Insurrection (p. 25), supplied by Clarendon in the autobiography written by him for the benefit of his children. The materials on which the previous publications were based have been strengthened and rearranged: an endeavour has been made to arrive at the whole story of the Insurrection, both in cause and consequence; and this essay may accordingly claim to have an independent position of its own.

Oliver Cromwell throughout these pages has received the respectful consideration that he justly commands; and regarding the distinguished band of literary adherents who have ranged themselves around him, as heretofore, a wholly non-contentious, uncon-

[1] "Oliver Cromwell, his character," etc., "Quarterly Review," April, 1886. "Cromwell and the Insurrection of 1655," "English Historical Review," July, October, 1888, Jan. 1889, in reply to Mr. Firth's article in the E.H.R., April, 1888, on the "Quarterly Review" article. "Oliver Cromwell, the Protector: An Appreciation based on contemporary evidence," pp. 89-130; Sampson Low, Marston and Co., 1890.

troversial treatment has been adopted. The relation of past events as they are, and not as they are represented, is the simplest and, on this occasion, the most seemly method. Contradiction is but an ill mode of stating a case; and the national loss of that eminent historian, Dr. Gardiner, would of itself render impossible any other course.

Had this literary forlorn hope been worthy of a dedication, I should have ventured to inscribe these pages to Charles Plummer, M.A., Fellow and Chaplain of Corpus Christi College, Oxford, as a slight mark of true respect and regard, of my indebtedness to him for valued help and encouragement, and of admiration for his "Life and Times of Alfred the Great."

REGINALD F. D. PALGRAVE.

SALISBURY,
April, 1903.

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INTRODUCTION

"The truth of History is simply the truth of the interpretation of an infinitude of details contemplated together."—WESTCOTT.

ALTHOUGH the Insurrection of March, 1655, against the Protectorate Government was, as Mr. Morley remarks, "an abortive and insignificant rising,"[1]—if it can be proved that the rising was the result of the connivance and contrivance of the Protector himself, the event becomes an incident of historical importance; and as the promotion by a ruler of a seemingly widespread revolt against his Government is an extraordinary proceeding, it may fairly be presumed that extraordinary influences originated the Insurrection.

An inquiry following the lines thus indicated must of necessity pursue an obscure, even an intricate course. To clear the way, therefore, the point of least mental resistance in our narrative shall be taken first, namely the Insurrection itself; to be followed by an examination into the series of events which led up to the Insurrection, and into the consequences that ensued.

[1] Morley, "Oliver Cromwell," p. 400.

Of the Insurrection of March, 1655, the brief occupation of the town of Salisbury by 200 Cavaliers under the command of Sir Joseph Wagstaff, commissioned by the King to act as a leader in the enterprise, and of Colonel John Penruddock and Mr. Hugh Grove, forms the most conspicuous feature.

On the afternoon of Sunday, 11th March, about 100 horsemen, well mounted, but not well armed, a motley band of country gentlemen, cord-wainers, husbandmen, weavers and yeomen, met in Clarendon Park, in distance about three miles from Salisbury. Thence, under those leaders, they rode to Blandford; there 80 more horsemen joined them. In vain they waited for other reinforcements; save two or three, no Hampshire friends appeared. So, fearing to wait any longer, Wagstaff and Penruddock's band, now mustering about 200 men, took the road back to Salisbury, and occupied the market-place during the early hours of Monday morning. They sent detachments through the streets; some attacked in vain the house of the High Sheriff of Wiltshire, Mr. John Dove; after half an hour's resistance and volleys of small shot from the thirty men under the command of Major Henry Wansey, they retired. Some of the insurgents were, in a sort of way, more successful; they broke open stable doors, and the doors of the gaol; horses were seized, and prisoners set free. They haled the Judges—the spring Assize Court was then in session—Chief Justice Rolle and Mr. Baron Nicholas, out of

their beds, and Wagstaff ordered that they should be hanged immediately. Penruddock passionately interceded and saved their lives. He proclaimed King Charles II., and declared that the Duke of York was coming from France with 10,000 men, that Lord Fairfax and General Waller, formerly the King's opponents, would join them with 12,000 men, and that there was to be a rising in every county.

These miserable delusions will be subsequently considered. Penruddock was seemingly unaware that, even if temporary success had crowned their enterprise, their success would have been of no avail, as the rising for the King "in every county," on which he reckoned, had already failed utterly of its own accord. A futile ending of the same kind awaited the momentary seizure of Salisbury by the Royalists. They did not gain a single recruit, save a few gaol-birds. They had done all they could; again, they could wait no longer. So Wagstaff and Penruddock drew their men together; in dismay and disorder they took the road through Downton, and fell back on Blandford. There they found no resting-place; not a single comrade joined them. Desertion thinned their ranks; they fled westward towards possible friends in Devonshire and Cornwall. This sad race for safety took them through Sherborne, through Yeovil, at one o'clock on Tuesday morning; Wednesday morning saw them in Cullompton, and the evening in South Molton. They could go no further; soon they were

attacked by a party of Cromwell's troopers, only about sixty in number. Some of the Royalists fired out of the windows of the houses in which they had refuged themselves; others fled, Major-General Wagstaff among the fliers. Penruddock and Hugh Grove bravely fought with their comrades; at last they yielded, having obtained written and signed conditions from Cromwell's officers insuring protection to those who surrendered, and were, with some fifty fellow-prisoners, committed to Exeter Gaol. Of these Penruddock and Grove and ten of their comrades suffered the death penalty for High Treason.[1]

The royalist rising in every county that Penruddock had proclaimed took place during the night of the previous Thursday, the 8th of March. Six or seven abortive efforts to appear in arms against the Government occurred in our western and northern counties, extending from Nottinghamshire, through Cheshire, Shropshire, Yorkshire, up to the neighbourhood of Newcastle. These isolated, disconnected efforts—actions they were not—consisted, without exception, of gatherings of a few Cavaliers who met, and promptly dispersed themselves, or of futile trysting-places where no men assembled themselves. So transient, indeed, were these occurrences that, as the

[1] Mr. Ravenhill's articles on the rising in the West, 1655, "Wilts Archæological Mag.," vols. xiii., xiv., May, 1872, Sept., 1873. Cf. Gardiner, "History of the Commonwealth," iii. 136, 142.

Protector justly told his Parliament, he doubted "whether it be believed there ever was any rising in North Wales, Shrewsbury, Rufford Abbey, Marston Moor, or in Northumberland and the other places where all these Insurrections were at that very time."[1]

A description of the Marston Moor expedition, the only occasion among the incidents of the 8th of March which made a far-off approach to actuality, amply exemplifies the justice of the doubt of which the Protector complained; for it, like all the other occurrences of that Thursday night, reached rapidly a brief and inglorious conclusion. The Marston Moor affair is thus described by the "Perfect Proceedings" newsletter of March, 1655: "York. The 8th of March instant, there was a meeting appointed by the Malignants in Yorkshire to surprise York City. To that end a party was to come on the west side of the City where Sir Richard Malleverer, with divers others, was on their march. About 100 horse came with a cartload of arms and ammunition to Hessey [*i.e.*, Marston] Moor. And at the windmill upon the Moor there came some intelligence that a party, that should have come on the other side of the City, was not ready that night. And more company failing, which they expected to meet them that night upon the Moor, they suddenly and disorderly retreated; some pistols

[1] Carlyle, iv. 111; Gardiner, "History of the Commonwealth," iii. 133; "Thurloe Papers," iii. 210, 223, 241, 253; vii. 302.

were scattered and found next morning, and a led horse with a velvet saddle left in Skipbrig Lane, which was found next day."

An essential similarity ran through all these attempts: the insurgents on every occasion retreated or dispersed of their own accord, or never met at all. This peculiarity, this indication that the Insurrection was founded on a common source of deception, receives consideration hereafter (p. 44).

The Insurrection of March, 1655, was not an isolated occurrence; it formed the central link in the chain of events which ensued after that memorable Tuesday, 30th of January, 1649, King Charles's death-day, until the close of the Protectorate. As therefore the Insurrection has a history of its own, to appreciate the full meaning of that event and of its consequences, the chief features of that history must be borne in mind. To this end we can avail ourselves of the account of the principal incidents which had happened since the King's death, given by Cromwell himself on a critical occasion, which was one of the resultant effects of the Insurrection. The accuracy of his narrative is unquestionable; it was uttered at a moment when "out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh," and was addressed to hearers before whom untruth was impossible. For his words were addressed to the Hundred Army officers who came before Cromwell, 27th February, 1657, to forbid his acceptance of the

Crown, and to maintain the ascendency of the Army which the King's death had placed in their hands.

This occasion comes handy to our purpose, for in the political supremacy of the Army lies the clue to the influence which originated the Insurrection, and which dominated the whole history of the Protectorate. It is sufficient, however, at this moment, to recall the circumstances which provoked the meeting of the Hundred officers. Parliament, in February, 1657, was busy over that attempt after a return to government by King, Lords, and Commons embodied in the bill known as "The Petition and Advice" (p. 79); and hence arose the "Passages between the Protector and the Hundred Officers of the Army touching Kingship," which are recorded in Burton's "Diary," and are thus accounted for by Carlyle:[1] "*Friday*, 27*th February*. 'The Parliament keep a Fast within their own House . . . preparatory to the great work now on hand of Settling the Nation.' In the course of which same day, with an eye also to the same great work, though to the opposite side of it, there waits upon his Highness, Deputation of a Hundred officers, Ex-Major Generals, and considerable persons some of them: to signify that they have heard with real dismay of some project now on foot to make his Highness King; the evil effects of which, as 'a scandal to the People of God,' 'hazardous to his Highness's person, and making way for the return of

[1] Burton's "Diary," i. 382; Carlyle, iv. 177.

Charles Stuart,' are terribly apparent to them!—Whereto his Highness presently makes answer, with dignity," yet in such outspoken fashion that those who are unacquainted with the terms of that answer may justly feel perplexed.

The Protector was in effect a King, and he was Commander-in-Chief; he was the appointed ruler over the Three Nations and over the Army; and yet the text on which he based his address was a declaration that "they," that is to say the Army, for the Hundred officers who stood before him were the representatives of the whole Army, "had made him their drudge upon all occasions";[1] and that it was they, therefore, who were responsible for the course of events which had occurred since the King's death, until the crisis which had called them together. Having retorted against them that "the time was when they boggled not at the word King . . . but how it comes to pass that they now startle at that title, they best knew," he turned against them a stream of "energetic remonstrance like a man wearied as he said of being on all occasions made a drudge. Strangely does he light up the past. His reply was a double arraignment of himself and of them for the most important things that both of them had done."[2]

Following Cromwell's lead we come to the first marked event after the execution of the King, to the

[1] Burton's "Diary," i. 382-384.

[2] Morley, "Oliver Cromwell," p. 439.

military revolution of Wednesday, 20th April, 1653, when Cromwell with an air of righteous indignation, and a file of musketeers, put an end to the "prating" of the Long Parliament. This was the first acknowledged act of drudgery. It was they, as he told his hearers, who had made him "dissolve the Long Parliament," and had then compelled him "to call a Parliament or Convention of their naming." Accepting the historical insight thus given us by Cromwell, it is evident that though the writs which convened the Little or the Barebones Parliament ran in the name of "Oliver Cromwell, Captain General and Commander in Chief," the real summoners were the Army men.

The failure of that experiment forced them to reconsider their position. A Constitution, known as the Instrument of Government, adhering as far as might be to governmental precedent, was, within three days after the self-effacement of the Little Parliament, "made," as Cromwell tells us, by a group of "eight of the Major-Generals."[1] The Instrument, as that document was habitually termed, vested the Chief Magistracy of the Three Nations in "a single person," H.H. the Lord Protector, Oliver Cromwell, assisted by a Council of State; and it prescribed the summons

[1] The report given in the "Clarke Papers" of the Protector's address to the Hundred officers, iii. 92. Cf. "Government is not to be made by six men"; the "Instrument of Government, none knew the father of it"; "It came nobody knew how," Burton's "Diary," i. 363; iv. 63, 195.

of a Parliament.[1] That the essential object of the Instrument was the establishment by statute of government by the sword is subsequently shown by an examination into the scope and provisions of that document (p. 74); and that this was the aim of that document Cromwell himself incidentally disclosed on the occasion we are considering, for he told the Army officers that it was because his first Parliament "took the Instrument into debate," that "they must needs be dissolved."

Parliaments were inevitably antagonistic to the supremacy of the Army: that supremacy Cromwell was bound to maintain; hence arose that marked feature in his political career, constant and untoward collision between him and Parliament. Even this occasion, the dissolution of 22nd January, 1655, worked him evil, because if Parliament had been allowed to shape out a Constitution for the Three Nations, the Royalists would not have been tempted into the Insurrection, and Cromwell would not have been forced to play his part in the deception. For if Parliament had annulled the Instrument of Government by the substitution of a Parliament exempt from external control, Cromwell would have been set free from the grasp of the Army, and the underlying motive for the Insurrection would have been wanting. This statement is made good hereafter (p. 70); at present it is sufficient to point out that, as it was shortly after the

[1] Gardiner, "History of the Commonwealth," ii. 282; iii. 6.

dissolution of the 22nd of January, which was forced upon Cromwell by the Army men, that the Insurrection of March, 1655, took place;[1] and as the Insurrection, which they and Cromwell brought into being, was made the pretext for that remarkable display of military supremacy which is known in history as the institution of the Major-Generals, it seems probable that these events were somehow interwoven together.

A brief description of the nature of that institution shows not only its object, but also that it stands out as perhaps the most exceptional feature in the history of our land. Within a few months after the disappearance of the Insurrection, in a time of stagnant peace, when not a single political mouse was on the stir (p. 55), Cromwell committed an act of "despotism compared to which all the illegal practices of former Kings, all that had cost Charles his life and crown appeared as dust in the balance."[2]

He divided England and Wales into eleven military provinces, and placed these districts under the rule of eleven Major-Generals. These military dictators were charged with the "duties of high police," with power "to put down unlawful assemblies by force, to disarm papists and persons dangerous to the peace of the nation, to exact bonds from any householder

[1] Guizot points out a connexion between the Dissolution and the Insurrection, "Commonwealth," ii. 133.

[2] Hallam, "History of England," ii. 251.

considered to be disaffected, for the good behaviour of his servants": [1] and the municipal authorities and the ministrants of religion and education were subjected to their control.

These military governors were also furnished with an armed force for the maintenance of their authority. The Protector raised, at the same time, a new standing militia of horse throughout England and Wales, which he placed under the command of the eleven Major-Generals: and to provide the wherewithal for the support of those troops, and of their commanders, Cromwell imposed a tax of £10 per cent. on the annual income of all Royalists whose estates exceeded £100 a year, and he bestowed upon the Major-Generals arbitrary and extensive powers for the levy of the decimation tax.

Thus the persons, purses, and consciences of their fellow-subjects stood at the mercy of those eleven dictators; and in the sixth year of "Freedom by God's blessing restored," the Protectorate, to adopt Mr. Firth's words, "stood revealed to England as a military despotism"; [2] and Shakespeare's "dear, dear land, dear for her reputation throughout the world," was "leased out . . . like to a tenement or pelting farm," and, according to one of Cromwell's subjects, "our laws and civil peace were prostituted to a power

[1] Morley, "Oliver Cromwell," pp. 406-408; Gardiner, "History of the Commonwealth," iii., chap. xl.

[2] Firth, "Oliver Cromwell," p. 417.

that was never set up in any nation without dangerous consequences."[1]

That power was the power of the sword. The Army, therefore, not Cromwell, were the authors of that "military despotism." That this was so, we have Cromwell's word. He told the Hundred officers who stood before him as the spokesmen for the Army, that it was "you" who "thought it was necessary to have Major-Generals."[2]

As he was, on his own showing, the drudge of the Army "upon all occasions," the supremacy of the Army over their ever victorious Commander, and therefore over England, is uncontestable. How was it that Cromwell, the soldier, and Cromwell, the politician, were the one so fearless and the other so fearful? A reply to that question is attempted further on (p. 71); at present it is sufficient to dwell for a brief space on the absolute ascendency of the Army over every other power and authority in the land. If 50,000 soldiers, the best drilled, the most perfect military machine then in existence, formed themselves into a military corporation animated by one impulse, and directed by a united organisation, the political influence of those 50,000 soldiers[3] would be as paramount as the terror of their swords. Even by their mere numerical

[1] See Note G, p. 73. [2] Burton's "Diary," i. 384.

[3] Number of the army. In 1652 "nearly 70,000"; 1654, "rather less than 53,000"; 1658, "42,500 or 43,500": Firth, "Cromwell's Army," p. 35.

strength their supremacy was assured. Though the calculation be somewhat guess-work, an army of 40,000 men, if the population of Cromwell's England, taken at five millions, be compared with the population of the present day, was equivalent to a force about 300,000 strong. Even if those men were not an armed host, still the potency of such a preponderating corporate body would be excessive.

Internal division and dissension alone could lay low the domination of the Army; and division and dissension were effectually guarded against. Their military organisation formed the basis of a compact political organisation. By general councils of the Army, of the officers, and by other military councils, which, for instance, met weekly "when the business of Kingship was being debated,"[1] even within the precincts of Whitehall, the Army Corporation was welded together.

Thus bound up in one body of men, the Colonels, Majors, and Captains who were in daily contact with the rank and file, in their turn influenced the Generals, and the Lieutenant-Generals, and the Major-Generals; and the whole Army worked, "one and all," for the maintenance of their rule, standing side by side in united fellowship. They knew full well, as Mr. Firth tells us, that the dispersion of the Long Parliament had "made the Army the Government of England";[2]

[1] "Clarke Papers," iii. 92.

[2] Firth, "Cromwell's Army," p. 367.

and their Government they were resolved to maintain.

That this was the settled purpose both of officers and men is traceable from the year 1645 until the close of the Protectorate.[1] Richard Baxter, whose information was derived from his ministrations among the Parliamentary soldiers, gives this report of their ordinary talk soon after the battle of Naseby: "They said what were the Lords of England but William the Conqueror's Colonels? or the Barons, but his Majors? or the Knights, but his Captains? They plainly showed me that they thought God's Providence would cast the trust of Religion and the Kingdom upon them as Conquerors."[2]

Such was the doctrine preached by the "proud self-conceited Sectaries," who "had got into the highest places, and were Cromwell's chief favourites";[3] and these men "obtained, by degrees, complete control of the Army."[4] And though Cromwell in course of time replaced those military Puritans by soldiers of an ordinary professional type, they retained with full fervency the doctrine that they were our conquerors, and were equally resolved to retain their conquest.

It was this resolution which brought the Hundred officers before the Protector; they insisted that he should not touch the Crown because "there were so

[1] Cf. Firth, "Cromwell's Army," p. 375.
[2] Richard Baxter, "Life and Times," ed. 1696, p. 51.
[3] *Ibid.*, p. 50. [4] Firth, "Cromwell's Army," p. 319

many" among them "that would be Half Kings themselves, that a King did seem intolerable to them";[1] and Cromwell's jesting remark to his companions, "What are we but poor men in comparison of the Kings of England?"[2] may have had a deeper meaning than appears on the surface. That the motive which urged on the Army officers in their contention with Cromwell and with Parliament over the Crown was the preservation of their Kingships is clearly proved by a writer of the time, who avows that "Sword dominion is too sweet to be parted with," and that "the main dread was that the civil power shall swallow up the military."[3] Even the mere wording of those sentences shows that in the writer's opinion the Protectorate Government was in fact Government by the Sword.

If some notion has been given of the nature of the Insurrection of March, 1655, and of the absolute supremacy of the Army over England, features in the Protectorate history round which this essay circles, the purpose of this introduction has been fulfilled; and attention can be given exclusively to the consideration of the part taken by the Protector in the Insurrection, and of the results which ensued therefrom, and from the supremacy of the Army to Cromwell, to England, and to the Army itself.

[1] Richard Baxter, "Life," etc., p. 98.
[2] Palgrave, "Oliver Cromwell, an Appreciation," p. 153.
[3] "Clarke Papers," iii. 105 n.

CHAPTER I

THE PART TAKEN BY THE PROTECTOR IN THE INSURRECTION OF MARCH, 1655

THE suggestion that Oliver Cromwell ensnared his subjects to their destruction by using deceitful emissaries who lured them into pretended plots and conspiracies against his Government, and that he shared and assisted in the deception which enticed the Royalists into the Insurrection of March, 1655, will occasion surprise, and perhaps resentment. Any help, therefore, towards rendering such an unpalatable statement, if not acceptable, at least permissible, may be utilised; and so the sad story of Sir Henry Slingsby, who was beguiled in similar fashion on to the scaffold, will be related by way of preface, because, as the men who deceived Slingsby acted, unquestionably, under Cromwell's instructions, like conduct on Cromwell's part, if the occasion required it, can afford no ground for astonishment; and blame, if blame must needs be, should rest on the author, not on the narrator of the offence.

The exhibition of that noble leader of men who "raised" a band of followers after his own heart, his

unconquerable Ironsides—unconquerable, as he gloried, because they "had the fear of God before them" and "made some conscience of what they did"[1]—instructing his soldiers how to entrap by lies and treachery their and his luckless prisoner, forms a painfully appropriate frontispiece to these pages.

Sir Henry Slingsby, one of the Cavaliers who rode out and then rode home again from Marston Moor (p. 5), was consequently apprehended and imprisoned at York, as were several of his comrades. Some were fined for riot, and others were released on bail. Slingsby was not set free; he was kept in custody at Hull[2] under the charge of the garrison officers, until he, in his turn, was released by the executioner's axe on Tower Hill, during the month of June, 1658.

After Slingsby had been in imprisonment about a year and a half, he was induced to believe that his custodians, Major Waterhouse, and even Colonel Smith, the Governor of Hull,[3] were Royalists at heart, and might be induced to range themselves among the King's adherents. Slingsby was "a man of good understanding, but of a very melancholic nature and of very few words";[4] still, so assured was he of Major Waterhouse's sympathy, that from October, 1657,

[1] Carlyle, iv. 224.

[2] Gardiner, "History of the Commonwealth," iii. 150, 200.

[3] "Thurloe Papers," vii. 123.

[4] Clarendon, "History of the Rebellion," ed. 1839, p. 902. Cf. Jane to Nicholas, "S. P. Dom., 1658-59," p. 21.

until the close of the year, he sought assiduously by messages written on the leaves of his "table book," and by friendly talk to detach the Major from the Protector's service, seemingly with such success that he discussed with him the surrender of Hull to the King.

The object of Slingsby's messages and talk was clear; but legal proof was wanting of his treasonable intentions. Three months elapsed; but still Slingsby kept outside the net his gaolers spread for him. Here the Protector, having been kept informed of Slingsby's behaviour by the Governor, intervened, and he wrote to Colonel Smith desiring that the conviction of Slingsby should be secured by the evidence of two witnesses. That this was the tenor of the Protector's instructions is shown by the following letter from Colonel Smith:

"May it please your Highness, I have received your Highness' letter of the 30th January, and according to your Highness' commands, I have endeavoured by all the ways and means that I possibly could, to get further proof against Sir Henry Slingsby, besides Major Waterhouse; but cannot by any means accomplish it for the present. I have desired the Major to use all the arguments he would to persuade" Slingsby "to give way to the Major to engage a friend of his in the plot, who should be as a messenger betwixt them, for the better carrying on of the business; but he would

not condescend to it, telling the Major that it would be dangerous to both of them to have any other made privy to it, till nearer the time for putting things in execution . . .

"Your Highness' most humble and most faithful servant,

"HEN. SMITH.

"Hull, Feb. 4th, 1657." [1]

Slingsby remained in this mood during the ensuing five weeks, until on the 13th March the Governor was able to inform Cromwell that "his commands" had been obeyed; that Slingsby had endeavoured "to engage Captain Overton, as he had formerly Major Waterhouse." [2] The second witness was obtained; so far Governor Smith had succeeded. The Protector's demands were, however, not yet satisfied. From Slingsby a still more convicting proof of his designs must be extracted; for the Governor ends his letter thus: "When the business is accomplished according to your Highness' former commands, I shall give your Highness a more full account thereof."

Within about three weeks the Protector received that "full account." By some means or other Slingsby, though closely imprisoned in Hull Castle, and surrounded by watchers and gaolers, had received a Commission written on parchment, dated "Bruges. 12 March 1657," whereby Charles, by the Grace of God King of England, appointed his trusty friend Major

[1] "Thurloe Papers," vi. 777. [2] "Thurloe Papers," vi. 870.

Waterhouse, Governor of Hull Castle; and on the 2nd April "the business" was at last "accomplished." Governor Smith, having acted according to his Highness's commands, reports that he had obtained "full and conclusive evidence against Sir Henry," as he had delivered "the enclosed commission to Major Waterhouse in the presence of Captain Overton."[1]

To use the Governor's phrase, the "business was ripe"; Slingsby was consigned to the Tower and to the dock of the High Court of Justice. His conviction was a certainty; he was "a false traitor and enemy to H.H. the Lord Protector"; but that Slingsby was a dangerous conspirator, that he was aught but a powerless, deluded prisoner could not be proved against him. The dismal story of his entrapment was all that could be alleged against him by his gaolers. Their own tale attested the truth of Slingsby's exclamation, when his eyes were at last opened: "I see that I am trepanned by those two fellows: I never sought to them but they to me."[2]

A man whilst he is being trepanned is incapable of mischief. His trepanners would cease their practices if he became dangerous; and that Slingsby was utterly unharmful is shown by Cromwell's conduct. He watched over his servants whilst they worked upon his

[1] "Thurloe Papers," vii. 14, 46, 47.

[2] "State Trials," v. 879. Cf. Palgrave, "Oliver Cromwell, an Appreciation," p. 296; Baker, "Chronicle," p. 561; Heath, "Chronicle," p. 403.

prisoner; he directed them to cajole Slingsby into that fatal act of compliance, the second witness; and then, after three weeks' delay, into the delivery of the Royal Commission. The Protector kept Slingsby on the ply for more than three months. Had he been a plotter to a purpose, H.H.'s commands would have promptly consigned him to the Tower.

The story of Slingsby's death bears, in itself, its own application; it touches the point in question; for if Cromwell personally superintended the practices which his soldiers played off upon their prisoner, no scruple would restrain the Protector from similar conduct, if occasion arose for practising a similar form of deceit upon other Royalists. Such an opportunity did arise. During the two months which preceded the Insurrection of March, 1655, the course of events produced an occasion when, if Cromwell's soldiers appeared among the Royalists as tempters, the temptation would prove irresistible. The officers of the Protector's Army did avail themselves of the opportunity; and Cromwell sanctioned and acted with them in the deceit they practised upon the King's adherents in order to bring the Insurrection into being.

The irresistibility of the opportunity lay in the absolute inability of the Royalists to rise in arms without the aid of other forces. The nation, sick of civil war, however distasteful might be the Protector's Government, were resolved on unresisting submission. The "melancholic conclusion" formed

by General Leslie whilst on the way to the overthrow at Worcester regarding the people around him, "that these men would never fight,"[1] was still more applicable to the Royalists five years after that "crowning mercy" had placed them under the heel of Cromwell and the Army. A landowner might, as in Clarendon Park, induce some yeomen, farriers, and ploughmen to ride out with him; but the mass of his fellow-countrymen would not fight.

Common sense taught them to sit still. The Royalists by themselves, impoverished, untrained, unofficered, almost unarmed, could do naught against Cromwell.[2] If all the Cavaliers in England capable of bearing arms could have been brought together, they could not have faced for a moment a detachment of the Protector's 50,000 soldiers, of an army that was the most powerful military instrument in Europe. Mutiny in his Army afforded the sole chance for the Royalists. If even a small portion of the Army turned against the Protector, the Royalists, if forewarned, might strike in, perhaps, effectively for the King. They were therefore very impressionable in that direction; and the Royalists, who, throughout the summer of 1654, were in consultation among themselves and with the King's advisers at Cologne over the pos-

[1] Clarendon, "History of the Rebellion," ed. 1839, Book XIV., pp. 810, 866.

[2] "Cal. Clarendon MSS.," ii. 396; Horatio Brown, "Venetian Studies," Sagredo's Report, p. 393.

sibility of an armed rising, were keenly alive to hints or rumours which furthered the hope of such a chance. They were, therefore, during the winter greatly encouraged by the resentment aroused among the Republicans and Levellers by the more than kingly power vested in the Protector; and symptoms occurred showing that a wave of discontent was passing over the Army.[1]

So auspicious was the temper of the time, that Sir Edward Hyde wrote, 1st December, 1654, to the Marquis of Ormond, and in these two men lodged the energy and sagacity of the King's Court, that "all things go in England as well as you wish, and we have reason to believe that the Army will begin the business for us, and even do the work for us; and we expect speedily to hear the day." During the ensuing six weeks these hopes were fervent. On the 12th January, 1655, Ormond, as appears by a letter to Hyde, expected that "the business" would soon "break forth," and held himself ready to cross over to England.[2]

Then these high hopes vanished utterly. It became evident that the fidelity of the Army to the Protector "remained," in Secretary Thurloe's words, "entire and of a piece";[3] and Ormond, 29th January, writes to

[1] Morley, "Oliver Cromwell," p. 399; Gardiner, "History of the Commonwealth," iii. 69-78.

[2] Clarendon State Papers, iii. 259, 262.

[3] Vaughan, "Protectorate," i. 78.

Hyde that he is coming "to assist the best I can at a melancholy consultation what the King is next to do; for I something more than doubt that the frame of his business is so broken, that it will not admit of piecing. . . . God comfort us, my good Chancellor."[1]

This letter had not been written many days, when news came to Cologne that the "broken business" was not merely pieced together, but moulded into a condition which promised to the royal cause certainty of success; that not only would the Army "do the work" for the Royalists, but would, if they rose in arms, work with the Royalists. The King was informed that many convinced republicans in Cromwell's Army were then actually in conference with the more zealous among the Royalists. They were holding not merely brief and hurried interviews; they "conversed much together." Which side began the conversation is not revealed; though it is hardly likely that a Royalist would declare himself to be a Royalist, and indulge in treasonable talk with Cromwell's soldiers, without previous encouragement.

The authority for these statements is the autobiography which Lord Clarendon wrote for the benefit of his children during the closing years of his life, and his words shall now be used as far as possible.[2]

[1] Clarendon State Papers, iii. 263.

[2] "The Life of Edward, Earl of Clarendon, written by himself," ed. 1761, ii. 25-27. Cf. Clarendon, "History of the Rebellion," ed. 1839, p. 871.

That treasonable proposals were interchanged is shown by the result of these negotiations. The Royalists "who conversed much with the officers of the Army" were persuaded, or, to quote Clarendon, "unskilfully disposed to believe that all they who they had reason to believe did hate Cromwell would easily be induced to serve the King"; and this expectation was apparently fully realized. The Royalists became convinced that "some of" the officers with whom they conversed "were resolved to serve his Majesty"; and of this determination these officers gave to the Royalists practical proof, for they "were willing to advise with them . . . upon the places of rendezvous, and what methods should be observed in the enterprises," and were ready "to do all things they," the Royalists, "should require which might advance his Majesty's service."[1]

What more was wanted? The moment for action had come. On the other hand the ablest, best advised of the King's adherents in London, who composed the Committee, six or eight in number, known as "The Sealed Knot,"[2] in whose judgement the King, and Hyde, and Ormond confided, held a wholly contrary opinion. They warned their zealous comrades "to take heed they were not destroyed"; that they would, if they trusted those Army officers, be

[1] Clarendon, "Life," etc., ii. p. 26.

[2] Clarendon, "Life," etc., ii. 23; Gardiner, "History of the Commonwealth," ii. 427, iii. 126.

"betrayed, which in the language of the time was called trepanned."[1]

For both these contending views plausible grounds could be alleged. The party of action might justly point out the risk which the Army officers brought upon themselves by those conferences. If the Royalists were as shaky in their allegiance to the King as the officers were to the Protector, a counter betrayal by the Royalists would bring prompt destruction on those traitorous soldiers. Even if the Royalists were staunch allies, the "much conversation" between Cromwell's men and the King's men would, almost to a certainty, attract "the all-seeing vigilance of Cromwell and his instruments." Expectation was in the air; the newsletters of February and March gave public notice that the King and the Malignants were on the move. On the 13th February the Protector harangued the Lord Mayor and the City authorities on the coming insurrection.[2] Could the sincerity of the men who imperilled their lives by their offer to serve the King be doubted?

On the other hand, the sincerity of those offers was highly questionable. How improbable was it that soldiers, stern republicans, ardent Levellers, should of their own accord devote their lives and swords to

[1] Clarendon, "Life," ii. 27.

[2] "Perfect Diurnal," 26th Feb.-5th March, 1654-5. Gardiner, "History of the Commonwealth," iii. 128; Vaughan, "Protectorate," i. 143.

Charles Stuart? Hatred to Cromwell must have carried those ultra-democrats, men of the Ironside spirit, a long way when it landed them in love for that lewd, papistical young prince. And was there, then, any such hatred to Cromwell among his soldiers? On that score Mr. Secretary Thurloe was thoroughly well assured. Writing, 10th November, 1654, on friendly and yet official terms to his friend Pell in Switzerland, he tells him that though an attempt had been made "to disaffect the Army to the Government, the Army remains entire and of a piece"; again, 24th November, that though the enemy gives out there is a great division in the Army, and dissatisfaction with H.H. and the Government, such reports are "wholly groundless," and in February that "all things have a face of peace and quiet."[1]

The restraining efforts of the warier Royalists ended in failure. That failure, as matters then stood, was inevitable; and the circumstances which created that inevitability are clearly set forth by Lord Clarendon in his autobiography. The Restoration of 1660 naturally takes a prominent place in the story of his life, and he gives a vivid picture of the troubles which beset the newly enthroned King. Foremost among these troubles was the jealous discord which prevailed among the King's supporters, and especially among the men who had devoted themselves to his cause in England during the Protectorate. To account for the outburst

[1] Vaughan, "Protectorate," i. 78, 84, 126, 143.

of anger and discontent which raged round the throne, Clarendon went back from 1660 to the winter and spring of 1654-5; and he attributes the origin of the "quarrels, factions and animosities" which possessed the Cavaliers in 1660 to the quarrels and factions among them which preceded, and indeed produced, the Insurrection of March, 1655, and especially to the discord which centred round and in the Committee known as the Sealed Knot.[1]

During the year 1654, and until its close, the Sealed Knot, working in harmony among themselves, and possessing the King's confidence, were able to restrain the more restless of their associates from entering into rash and ill-advised enterprises. That was the pressing danger of the time. Here lay the Sealed Knot's chief opportunity for usefulness. "There was such a devilish practice of trepanning grown in fashion, that it was not safe to speak to any man in those treacherous days";[2] and the inability of the Royalists to act by themselves, unassisted by mutiny and disaffection in Cromwell's Army, especially exposed them to the wiles of tempters such as the Army officers with whom they were then conferring.

The beneficial influence of the Sealed Knot remained paramount until the winter of 1654-5, when "a fatal quarrel" broke out between two of the chief members of the Committee. The strife which this

[1] Clarendon, "Life," ii. 20, 23.

[2] "Memoirs of Col. Hutchinson," Bohn's ed., p. 374.

quarrel engendered so wrecked the prospects of the royal cause that Sir Richard Willis, a leading member of the Sealed Knot, in despair "about this time engaged to be a spy to Cromwell," who consequently thenceforth held the Royalists in his grasp.[1] That quarrel destroyed the authority of the Sealed Knot. The fighting section of the Royalists were set free; and an opportunity was created which supplied the exact occasion to an enemy who might be seeking to ensnare them. Surely success was certain when Cromwell's men offered "to do all things which might advance his Majesty's service?" The bait was irresistible.

The Insurrection accordingly took place; the traitorous soldiers, who were working for an object of their own (p. 78), attained their end without hindrance or personal risk; and thought naturally turns from them to the man most vitally affected by their manœuvres, to the Protector. Was he aware that his soldiers were plotting for the overthrow of their Commander-in-Chief? Clarendon answers that question. He closes his account of the methods whereby the party of action among the Royalists were led "to believe that all they who they had reason to believe did hate Cromwell would easily be induced to serve the King," with these words, "and many of the officers in their behaviour, discourses and familiarity contributed to that belief; some of them not without the

[1] Clarendon, "Life," ii. 25. See Note A, p. 95.

privity and allowance of Cromwell or his secretary Thurloe."[1]

Here is the explanation of that "abortive and insignificant rising,"[2] known as the Insurrection of March, 1655. As it was under Cromwell's control, could it have been otherwise?

In the view thus opened out of Cromwell watching the genial behaviour and friendly discourses whereby his soldiers ensnared the Royalists to their destruction, the Protector, in the background, becomes the master of the situation, the manager of the performance; he takes his due place as the foster-father of the Insurrection. Even if those officers were unconscious of his spiritual presence among them, and if he had remained only their silent partner, the fact that the Commander-in-Chief was cognisant of their practices was in itself sufficient to turn his subordinates into mere ciphers.

The Protector did not, however, merely play the part of the presiding Being in the cloud. He and his officers worked together. That this was the case is disclosed not by Clarendon, but by another informant, who curiously enough bore the name of Cromwell. From him we learn, as will be explained more fully hereafter, that by the Protector's contrivance, some of those beguiling officers met and encouraged onward the Earl of Rochester, when he reached London on

[1] Clarendon, "Life," ii. 26. See Note B, p. 95.

[2] Morley, "Oliver Cromwell," p. 400.

his way to act as a leader in the coming enterprise (p. 34).

The active part thus taken by the Protector in that "purposed thing," the Insurrection, was, if the outbreak was to take place, unavoidable. Charles and his men were in this difficulty. How could Lord Rochester and Sir Joseph Wagstaff, and their companions, sent here by the King, appear at the "places of rendezvous" appointed by Cromwell's soldiers? If the outbreak was to be, the presence of those leaders was essential; but the admission into England of these men was seemingly almost an impossibility. The Protector's Home Office, directed by the able and zealous Secretary Thurloe, and their harbour officials, spies and informers at Cologne, Dover, and the southern coast, working under such a master, were active and acute; none could evade their watch over the gateways into England. And most conspicuous, most unconcealable, were the King's emissaries. Their very appearance disclosed their warlike errand; they were wholly unlike the peaceful trader, the only disguise possible to them. The moment of their arrival here was in itself highly ominous; the air was full of disturbing rumours; and the conspirators reached our shores during February, only three or four weeks before the imminent outbreak. Almost in a gang they crossed over to Dover, and to those landing-places on our southern coast which showed that the travellers came from the King's country; and yet Lord Rochester,

Major Armorer, and their brother plotters, about a dozen in number,[1] safely reached their various meeting places in England.

The freedom and immunity the conspirators enjoyed excited amazement and suspicion. What were Cromwell's spies and watchmen about?[2]

To that question a description of Lord Rochester's admission into England may serve as answer. In company with Sir Joseph Wagstaff he landed at Margate; they were the Commanders of the insurgents. The arrest of these two men would in all probability have prevented the enterprise. As if to make themselves conspicuous, Rochester and Wagstaff did not hide themselves among the crowd on an ordinary packet boat; they came ashore from a little vessel hired for their transport, which they kept on the coast two days to take back their messages to the King; and their messages must have been encouraging, for Rochester "on landing found Mr. Morton, who carried on their trade,"[3] had come from London to meet them. If called to account, no man was less able to conceal his true character than Lord Rochester. He was addicted to free speech, jovial ways, rich apparel, most unlike a trader from the Continent; and

[1] "Thurloe Papers," iii. 190.

[2] Clarendon, "History of the Rebellion," ed. 1839, Book XIV., p. 873; "Thurloe Papers," iii. 190, 198, 224.

[3] Ormond to Hyde, "Cal. Clarendon MSS.," iii. 23. See Note C, p. 96.

he was arrested, he was "examined twice, but allowed to go on to London," where, having remained a few days and "consulted with great freedom with the King's friends," [1] he passed on to head the Marston Moor expedition.

That the enemy was at hand the Protector himself had given public notice. How was the seeming negligence, twice repeated, of the Government watchers to be accounted for? Their remissness received this interpretation. It was surmised that the repeated detention and release which Rochester experienced was due to the craft of the Government; and that this surmise was afloat at the time is revealed by Colonel Cromwell, a cousin of the Protector. During the summer of 1655, about six months after the Insurrection, he called on a friendly Royalist at the Hague, gave him a dinner, and made a "long discourse to him of his integrity to the King," and of information imparted evidently for the King's benefit. After mentioning the Protector's "fears and jealousies and great apprehension of the Army," and in one way or another Cromwell always did feel "apprehension of the Army"—though fear of mutiny may not have been then before him—the Colonel warned his friend "that he," Cromwell, "hath notice of all that we do at Cologne; that my Lord of Rochester was known to Cromwell to be in England as soon as he landed;

[1] Ormond to Hyde, 3rd March, 1655, "Cal. Clarendon MSS.," iii. 23; Clarendon, "History of the Rebellion," ed. 1839, p. 873.

and that he was permitted to make those escapes of purpose to make him have the greater confidence in those persons he communicated with, as he would intimate, of the Army, whereby Cromwell would learn always what was to be done, those being his friends really, ours in show."[1]

What a subtle network of intrigue is disclosed by the Colonel's information? Wagstaff, Rochester's companion, alike in object and in demeanour, landed with him; but Wagstaff was not detained by Cromwell's officials; he was not wanted. But they did want Rochester; his services as a decoy duck to his associates in London were wanted; for the Insurrection depended on his sanction, and so he was arrested and then set free. The liberty conceded to Wagstaff, and the detention of Rochester are otherwise unaccountable. Before he started, the King received from Rochester an undertaking that he would, when he reached London, carefully examine into the preparations for the rising, and that if he was not satisfied, he would stop the affair.[2]

If, therefore, the Insurrection was to take place, it was essential that Lord Rochester should be brought under the influence of those Army officers, the King's friends "in show," Cromwell's friends "really," on whose promises the Insurrection turned; and it was

[1] "Nicholas Papers," iii. 230.

[2] "Thurloe Papers," iii. 344; Clarendon, "History of the Rebellion," ed. 1839, p. 872.

especially needful that he should be encouraged to place confidence in those sham friends. The warnings that those who did trust in their offers would "find themselves trepanned," given by the wiser Royalists, had not been without effect. Towards expelling such a notion no stronger encouragement could be imparted to Rochester than his own experiences. Using the arguments of Clarendon the historian, Rochester saw proved by his own case, that "there could not be a greater manifestation of the universal aversion in the whole kingdom towards Cromwell and his Government than that . . . such signal and notorious persons," Rochester himself, for instance, "could resort to London, and remain there without any such information or discovery as might enable" Cromwell "to cause them to be apprehended."[1] Self-deception is complete deception: Rochester's "permitted escapes" served their turn, and he sanctioned the outbreak.

Colonel Cromwell's statement that Cromwell employed his soldiers in the deceit they practised upon the Royalists fully confirms and bears out Clarendon's account of the origin of the Insurrection. Both witnesses, though widely severed from each other by time, place, and circumstance, exhibit alike Cromwell's officers as the tempters of the Royalists, with his connivance; and as the information derived from Colonel Cromwell was noted down within a few months after

[1] Clarendon, "History of the Rebellion," ed. 1839, p. 873.

the event, during the summer of 1655, the narrative, which the Ex-Chancellor recorded at Molins during June, 1672, cannot have been a post-Restoration invention.

The methods whereby some of Rochester's comrades escaped from the detention which they also underwent contribute indirect, though fairly certain, confirmation of the truth of Clarendon's and Colonel Cromwell's statements; and as these methods are revealed in letters addressed by the Deputy Governor of Dover Castle to Secretary Thurloe, and by other letters among his official correspondence, the information thus obtained is stamped with the authority of the Protector's Home office.

Out of the company of about a dozen Cavaliers who were sent over by the King to lead and assist in the Insurrection, apparently only four, besides Rochester, underwent arrest by the Port authorities of Dover as suspicious persons. Among them were Major Armorer and Daniel O'Neill, "two of the chiefest complotters in the design"; and their capture was considered by Ormond "a considerable defeat."[1]

With the help, then, of the guidance supplied by the documents in the Home Office, the somewhat intricate method by which Major Armorer was liberated shall be traced out; and it may, perhaps, be recognised that his release was another "permitted" escape.

[1] "Cal. Clarendon MSS.," iii. 21, 22; "Thurloe Papers," iv. 198.

However that may be, undoubtedly Armorer was in Dover Castle on Wednesday, February 14th, and on the following Saturday or Sunday he was in London. Not less certain is it that Armorer was set free under instructions sent by Thurloe to the Port authorities, either on Thursday the 15th or on Friday the 16th, and that thereupon those instructions were immediately cancelled.[1]

Keeping, then, an almanack for the year 1655 before us, these are the dates and incidents of Major Armorer's release. He and Daniel O'Neill were prisoners within the walls of Dover Castle during Wednesday, 14th February. On that day Armorer, signing the letter "N. Wright," wrote thus to Sir Robert Stone, in London, with whom Armorer was evidently on friendly terms: "I beseech you do me the favour to prevail with some of your friends near H.H. the Lord Protector to get me leave either to come to London, or to return to Rotterdam. . . . I know you will not forget friends in trouble." Armorer added, "Pray direct your letter to Mr. Robert Day, Clarke of the Passage. I have desired Morris to send this to you."[2]

Sir Robert did not "forget friends in trouble." Im-

[1] Wilson's Letter to Thurloe, 21st Feb., 1654-5; "Thurloe Papers," iii. 164. See Note D, p. 97.

[2] "Thurloe Papers," iii. 137. This letter bears an endorsement, "Letter of Nicholas Armourer to Sir R. Stone," though the memorandum was presumably not noted down immediately upon the receipt of the letter.

mediately upon the receipt of the letter from Armorer, "For my worthy friend Sir Robert Stone, at Carewe House in Tuttle Streete in London," he sent it on to another friend, the nearest of all to the Lord Protector, to Mr. Secretary Thurloe, with a note dated 15th February, which began, "Sir, this enclosed is come to my hands. I am confident you will find he that writ it, hath taken up the name of Wright"; and Stone added particulars which showed that Morris, who was Wright's comrade, was undoubtedly "one of a cabal" of active Royalists in England; and was "a gent to the Princess Royal." Wright, therefore, also was probably a Royalist of the same sort. ("Thurloe Papers," iii. 137.)

As Stone's note and the inclosure are among the Thurloe Papers they must have duly reached him; and so, as it cannot be supposed that without any purpose at all Secretary Thurloe interfered with the system then in force regulating the transit of strangers through the Port of Dover, especially during a season of danger, those letters, it may be fairly assumed, prompted the following course of action which he took directly after their receipt.

His officials transmitted to the Port Commissioners at Dover, either towards the close of Thursday the 15th, or during Friday the 16th, a Commission from H.H. the Protector giving directions for the treatment of suspicious and detained persons, which superseded "the Commission for the Passe" under which the

Port authorities were then acting; and then, during the days that intervened between that Friday and the Tuesday of the ensuing week, Thurloe wrote a letter signifying to the Port Commissioners that it was "His Highness' pleasure to revoke his last order to them,"[1] *i.e.*, the Commission which they had so recently received. In the meantime, empowered by that Commission, either on Friday, 16th, or on Saturday, 17th, the Port Commissioners had set Wright-Armorer free, Day, the Passage Clerk, having vouched that he was a peaceable and respectable merchant.

Whatever explanation may be attempted to account for that Commission of such brief duration, it certainly was a singular official performance; and Thurloe certainly was no fool. Still he may have been guided by motives beyond our ken; and when he dispatched the Commission to Dover on Friday, he may have been unaware that Wright was Major Armorer, the bearer of a letter from the King, though Stone had informed him that Wright was an assumed name, in itself a suspicious circumstance. Suspicion, however, was speedily converted into certainty. On the next day, Saturday, 17th, Thurloe was warned by Stone that "our merchant Wright in Dover Castle I understand will prove Mr. Armorer one of the Princess Royal's gentlemen";[2] and on the following day, Sunday, 18th, Thurloe received a further warning from Stone that Armorer and Trelawney, alias Morris, who was set

[1] "Thurloe Papers," iii. 164. [2] "Thurloe MSS.," xxii. 107.

free with him, were in London, and Stone believed that "he could hear of them."[1] Yet though ample precautions were taken for the detention of insurgent Royalists, though guards were set at every street's end in London,[2] Armorer in due course joined Rochester in Yorkshire. Surely, regarded even from an ordinary, unofficial point of view, "these are not natural events, they strengthen from strange to stranger."

And of equal singularity was the way in which Daniel O'Neill, the other chief complotter, and his companion, known as Mr. Broughton, effected their entrance into England; the former escaping from the walls of Dover Castle, while the latter was released from the house in the town where he was detained. After about ten or twelve days' imprisonment they also were able to take their parts in the coming Insurrection. As regards Broughton's escape, although Thurloe himself had made a great "coil" over the Armorer blunder among the Port authorities, with whom the Mayor of Dover was a coadjutor, and "although" the Mayor "had no authority at all to intermeddle," he gave, acting on his own responsibility, Broughton "a pass and let him go";[3] and soon afterwards O'Neill walked out of the Castle unhindered by the Governor, Major-General Kelsey.

Kelsey's conduct was thus brought under the Pro-

[1] "Thurloe Papers," iii. 162.
[2] "Cal. Clarendon MSS.," iii. 20.
[3] "Thurloe Papers," iii. 180.

tector's notice by Manning, his chief spy at Cologne, in a letter to Thurloe, 13th March, 1655: "There is something of concernment now that I cannot omit to tell you, namely, that the Governor of Dover must be either knave or fool. He hath lately let pass Wilmot (Lord Rochester), and Phillipps, Armorer, Halsey, and Daniel O'Neill. Some of them he restrained so carelessly, as if it were on purpose for them to escape, especially the last," O'Neill.[1] Rochester's "permitted escapes" suggest that Manning unconsciously came near the truth in his remark that the Governor's seeming carelessness was "on purpose" to set O'Neill free; and certainly Kelsey's carelessness did not displease the Protector.

Cromwell was "an ill man to cross"; the admission of enemies on active service against the State is a serious offence; yet in the following May, Kelsey, the knave or fool, was especially awarded a yearly salary of £400 a year as Admiralty Commissioner, and in August he was appointed Major-General over Kent and Surrey, bringing in £666 13*s.* 4*d.* a year, in addition to his pay as Colonel.[2] These sums, combined together and estimated at our money value, amount at least to about £5,000, a not unsatisfactory yearly income to a man who began his career by the sale of "leather points."[3]

[1] "Thurloe Papers," iii. 190.
[2] "Cal. S. P. Dom., 1655," pp. 92, 152, 153, 275.
[3] Burton's "Diary," i. 331.

In view of the treatment accorded to the Governor, the fact that the Passage Clerk's share in Armorer's escape was unnoticed by his superiors occasions no surprise; and indeed they could hardly touch him, for he stood thus with his employers. Thurloe, on the one hand, must have perceived from the postscript to "N. Wright's" letter, that Day and Armorer were on an easy footing; and Thurloe knew also that Day by false statements to the Port Commissioners had obtained Armorer's release. Day, on the other hand, must have perceived that Thurloe by the Commission, which was so speedily revoked, had given him his opportunity, and had played into his hands, as though Thurloe had sought to set Armorer free. Thurloe and Day must, therefore, to a certain extent have felt in touch with each other; and accordingly, as might be anticipated, the help Day gave to that chief complotter was not punished even by dismissal, although Thurloe was warned at that time, by "very sure hands," that "one Day, the Clerk of the Passage, hath permitted many dangerous persons to pass into England," and subsequently, during the summer, that Day was a "rogue," and was giving free passage out of England to the fugitive Cavaliers who had taken part in the luckless Insurrection.[1]

On Governor Kelsey's careless guard over O'Neill, and on the method by which Major Armorer was released from Dover Castle, much stress need not be

[1] "Thurloe Papers," iii. 198, 224, 428, 659. See Note E, p. 98.

laid, as we have Clarendon's and Colonel Cromwell's combined evidence that it was with Cromwell's "privity and allowance" that his officers incited the Royalists into the Insurrection of March, 1655; and it is unnecessary to prove the accuracy of Guizot's remark that, though fully forewarned of the coming event, "soit hazard, soit dessein, Cromwell ne fit rien efficace pour la prevenir." [1]

The indications afforded by the Insurrection itself of a fraudulent origin may, however, be considered, as they form part of the history of the event. As the Insurrection was superintended by Cromwell, it needs no telling that not a single mutineer, not a single deserter from his army joined the Wiltshire insurgents, or appeared at the various royalist trysting-places in the western and northern counties appointed for the 8th of March; nor that, in consequence, the Insurrection collapsed of its own accord. And the same deception which was practised on the Royalist leaders was brought to bear on their followers, thus showing the existence of a widely extended scheme for the enticement of the Royalists into revolt by the hope that, if they appeared in arms, the thorough-paced Republicans and Levellers, both in and out of the Army, would also rise against the Protector.

Whilst the King's adherents in London were in conference with the Army officers, other men were working in the counties on the same lines and with

[1] Guizot, "Hist. Commonwealth," ii. 128.

the same lies. Through the depositions laid before Thurloe, recruiting agents may be traced in the west of England who, to tempt their followers, told them that "all will be our own, for a part of the Army, almost half the Army, were engaged in" the enterprise, and that "the design was first put on foot by the Levellers, who were to be aiding and assisting the Cavaliers, and the Londoners were to fall on the Lord Protector." Sir Joseph Wagstaff and Colonel Penruddock, deluded in like manner, distributed similar false expectations among their associates. Other agents also practised the same deception upon the Wiltshire insurgents, for some of them declared "that the discontented Presbyters and Levellers had set them on this work, or they had not attempted this action. One of them vowing that if he did suffer for this, he would destroy some of them."[1]

If the conditions of the Salisbury rising be considered, Wagstaff's conduct is unaccountable, unless he acted on some such belief. Though "he looked not far before him," he was a soldier of experience; yet to what a desperate venture did he commit himself on that Sunday evening at Blandford! Having collected together all the men that Wilts, Hants and Dorset furnished, he put the fortunes of the royal

[1] "Thurloe Papers," iii. 182, 183, 242, 314, 344; "Perfect Proceedings News Letter," 8th March-15th March, 1654-5; also quotations from Newsletters, Ravenhill's Rising in the West, "Wilts Archæological Mag.," xiii. 147, 152.

cause "on the hazard of one doubtful hour." What possibility of success awaited him at the head of, to use the description of the time, "a company of mean fellows," valueless as soldiers? His sole resource was apparently the return upon Salisbury, to a district whence he had drawn every available recruit, to a city which could have given no promise of assistance. Yet back he went, though, as not a single Government soldier was at hand, he might, like all his co-adventurers, have found safety for himself and his men in immediate dispersal; and after all, hasty retreat and disorderly flight was the end of his campaign (p. 3).

Wagstaff's return to Salisbury may have been incited by a rumour then afloat which fixed Salisbury Plain as the rendezvous for the soldiers who were faithful to "the Good old Cause";[1] and the abortive midnight ride over Marston Moor, as the same report assigned to that open space another meeting of those mutineers, may have been prompted by the same delusion; for Rochester, who headed that expedition, "expected 4,000 in arms there with a design upon York; but he said some had deceived them,"[2] and the same source of disappointment is mentioned in the newsletter description of the affair.[3]

Englishmen do not usually turn tail and fly, no man pursuing. Despair caused by fruitless expecta-

[1] "Thurloe Papers," iii. 35. [2] Burton's "Diary," i. 231.
[3] Cf. "Cal. Clarendon MSS.," iii. 27.

tion must have caused Wagstaff's heady flight westward, and the scamper off the Moor; and all the other occasions in the fraud-created Insurrection exhibited the same symptoms of dismay. So transient was the Marston Moor affair, that a supporter of the Government declared in Parliament that even the description of that occurrence contained in the "Declaration of H.H." the Protector, the State paper he published "on the occasion of the late Insurrection and Rebellion," [1] failed to convince the incredulous member, who lived in the Marston Moor district, that the rising upon which, as Cromwell asserted, "the enemy most relied," was "within three miles of me." [2]

Of the shadowy unreal aspect that on the face of it pervaded that "general design," which, as the Protector declared, "all the world must know and acknowledge," some slight illustration is permissible. Take for example the absurd, almost comical circumcumstances that attended the attempt to surprise Chester Castle, commanded by Colonel Werden. On the appointed night, the 8th of March, the Colonel, remaining in his lodgings, dispatched three or four men to seize the castle. They were inhabitants of Chester, and of them one was Alexander, the tobacco-pipe maker. The attacking party returned and told their commander "that at the place where they intended to raise a ladder to surprise the Castle, they heard a

[1] "Old Parl. Hist.," xx. 434, 31st Oct., 1655.

[2] Burton's "Diary," i. 231.

sentinel walk and cough." At that report Colonel Werden was "very much startled," and sent Mr. Alexander and his party "back again to seize the Castle at any other convenient place." They obeyed, and "brought back word that still they heard sentinels walking." No third attempt was made; Colonel Werden contented himself by remarking "that he was very much troubled for that he could not contrive how to take the said Castle."[1] Even more apathetic was a prominent recruiter who had drawn several associates into a projected attack on Shrewsbury. During the evening before the night appointed for the enterprise, he told them that "he would send ten men according to his promise, but that he would not go himself because his wife was not well."[2]

"And thus by the goodness of God . . . the greatest and most dangerous Design, not only for the involving us in Blood and Confusion here at Home, but exposing us to the will of Foreigners, hath been defeated and brought to nothing; and this cruel and bloody Enemy put under as great and signal disappointments as any Age can produce an example of; it being a thing they had set their hearts upon, and was the work of almost Four Years' Contrivement."[3]

[1] "Thurloe Papers," iii. 677.

[2] "Thurloe Papers," iii. 253. Cf. Palgrave, "Oliver Cromwell, an Appreciation," pp. 97, 142.

[3] "Declaration," 31st Oct., 1655, p. 31; "Old Parl. Hist.," xx. 434.

This note of pious exultation drawn from the "Declaration of His Highness," addressed to his subjects "upon the occasion of the late Insurrection and Rebellion," forms a fitting close to this portion of our narrative.

How far his subjects were in tune with their Protector's call for national thanksgiving shall be considered in the ensuing chapter.

CHAPTER II

THE WAY IN WHICH THE PROTECTOR'S SUBJECTS REGARDED HIM, AND THE PART HE TOOK IN THE INSURRECTION

THE close of the last chapter supplies an apt illustration of the lying use which, according to Guizot, Cromwell made of that "apparition faible et fugitive," the Insurrection of March, 1655.[1] So feeble was the event, that it almost defied the Protector's powers of amplification to make anything out of it. Even his subjects appreciated the difficulty under which he laboured; and a suspicion arose that in order to secure a display of the bloodthirsty malignants, the advance of the Protector's troopers against the Salisbury insurgents had been purposely retarded (p. 62).

Whether true or not, the notion indicates the trend of public opinion, and serves as a finger-post pointing towards our present object, which is to show the thoughts and reasonings aroused by the Insurrection in the minds of Cromwell's subjects, and forms an

[1] Guizot, "Hist. Commonwealth," ii. 133.

appropriate introduction to this quotation from the letters Thurloe sent to his friend Pell in Zurich.

Reckoning up the "advantages the Protector has got by this business," the Insurrection, Thurloe begins, "First he has gained belief among all men that he hath not made a noise about plots and designs to get money out of people's purses, but that the danger he hath so often spoken of was real."[1] Sagacious as he was, Thurloe was led in that anticipation far away from the actual result of the "business." The misgiving which prompted that hope was fully realized. "All men," certainly many Englishmen believed on the contrary, that the Insurrection was an artificial, and therefore an impotent affair, which ran its course wholly under the control and patronage of the Government (p. 60).

Such was the natural tendency of their thoughts, prompted by what they saw around them. The report of the Venetian Ambassador Sagredo, who resided here from September, 1655, until the following January, "that the Government often invents conspiracies to afford a pretext against the Royalists, and therefore to increase the Army and the Guards,"[2] was based on the common opinion of his informants; and even Cromwell himself supplies a proof that the belief that the Government did invent conspiracies was assuredly held by members of his Parliament.

[1] Vaughan, "Protectorate," i. 152.

[2] Horatio Brown, "Venetian Studies," p. 393.

The consideration of a statement which the Protector made before Parliament regarding a former conspiracy, the Gerard and Vowel plot, is therefore no purposeless digression; it affords a conclusive illustration of the temper of the time. He was addressing his opening speech, 17th September, 1656, to his second Parliament, when necessity lay upon him of establishing a satisfactory reason for the infliction upon England of the Major-Generals (p. 11). To do so he sought to prove that the Insurrection was a complete justification for that institution. Proof that the Insurrection formed in itself a serious danger to the State was obviously no easy task; still more difficult was it, owing to the general belief that the Protector did "make a noise" about conspiracies which he had invented.

Stung into an ecstasy of anger by the obstinate adherence of his subjects to this opinion, misled by passion, he began his attempt to maintain the genuine and serious nature of the Insurrection by reverting to the assassination plot for which Gerard and Vowel were executed during the summer of 1654. Their trial aroused strong distrust. No definite project was proved against the prisoners; the worst that could be alleged was their participation in vague proposals for an attack on the Protector; and among other highly doubtful-looking circumstances it was seen that, although more than 500 supposed accomplices were arrested, the conspirator charged by the At-

torney-General with "the first hatching of the plot" remained at large, boasting in the streets of London "that the plot might go on"; whilst his coadjutor in the affair appeared as a witness for the Government. And the mistrust thus aroused was confirmed by Gerard's declaration in his dying speech on Tower Hill, that "the nest of the plot was at Whitehall," and that the hatcher of the plot was "in their hands," in the hands of the Government.[1]

It was therefore evidently in accord with the bent of public opinion that the following account of the Gerard and Vowel plot was given by a contemporary chronicler. That affair was planned, as he states, by the Protector "to give" the Royalists "some terror"; and he therefore "by his agents formed a plot to draw in some honest credulous persons of that party to their destruction; and in prosecution thereof in the month of May, Colonel Gerard," and also Vowel, were "apprehended for a pretended intention to assassinate the Protector."[2]

Whether well founded or not, such was the notion of the time; and from such an ugly notion Cromwell felt that he must purge himself. For that purpose he told his hearers that in the autumn of 1654,

[1] Carlyle, iv. 105-109; "State Trials," v. 522, 534, 536. Cf. Palgrave's Letters on Henshaw's Plot, "Athenæum," Nos. 3676, 3678, 3679, 3684, April-June, 1898; Dr. Gardiner's reply, "Athenæum," No. 3681, May, 1898; Palgrave, "Oliver Cromwell, an Appreciation," p. 34.

[2] E. Philipps, "Continuation of Baker's Chronicle," p. 551.

whilst his first Parliament was in session, he had sent to "many" of the members "several persons" who sought to convince them that Gerard and Vowel's plot "was no fable"; that they had been "arraigned for it," and "upon proof condemned for their designs to cut the throat of myself and three or four more. I say this was made good at the trial, . . . but what fame we lay under I know not! It was conceived it seems we had things which rather intended to persuade agreement and consent, and bring money out of people's purses, or I know not what: . . . in short nothing was believed, though there was a series of things distinctly and plainly communicated to many members."[1]

As the Protector himself asserts that many members of Parliament, in effect, gave him the lie direct, and that of the "things" "we did hint" to them establishing that the Gerard and Vowel plot was "no fable," "nothing was believed," no further evidence is needed to show that a fixed, well-assured belief that the Government invented plots was prevalent among Cromwell's subjects. A statement, however, by Colonel Okey to Parliament, that when some of the Army officers were in a state of discontent, "there came several trepanners from Whitehall,"[2] may be cited, because this assertion was made as quite a matter of course, and shows how men were wont to regard the practices of the Government.

[1] Carlyle, iv. 106. [2] Burton's "Diary," iv. 157.

The fame which the Insurrection "lay under" shall now as far as possible be defined; and with Cromwell's help the general belief that the enterprise was a got-up affair can be easily established and disposed of. His subjects shared in the opinion expressed by a Government official on the Continent that "the plot" was "not real."[1] If Mr. Bradshaw at Hamburg, merely following the guidance of his perception, took this view of the affair, his fellow-countrymen at home having the use of their eyes and ears were able with more certainty to come to that conclusion.

A revolt quenched by 60 out of Cromwell's 50,000 soldiers, without the loss, seemingly, of a single man; the helpless, hopeless retreat of the insurgents from Salisbury; the midnight scamper over Marston Moor; the attack on Chester Castle defeated by the coughing sentinel; the flight, no man pursuing, of every royalist gathering, proved by itself that the Insurrection was an unreal, fraud-created affair.

That "apparition faible et fugitive" floated for a moment over the surface of the land, otherwise in a state of utmost tranquillity, and immediately flickered out of sight, leaving not a spark behind. It was in vain that the Government sought to obtain evidence attesting the existence of a definite "general design" which, in Cromwell's words, "all the world must know and acknowledge." The Major-Generals and officers sent through the country to "improve the

[1] Hist. MSS. Com., 6th Report, p. 438.

late plot," to hunt after the guilty malignants and their practices, failed utterly. So vexed was Commissioner General Reynolds because royalist Shropshire yielded him no "complotters," because "so little proof of our pains doth yet appear," that he twice urged Thurloe to sanction his making the Cavaliers "speak forcibly by tying matches, or some kind of pain whereby they may be made to discover the plot." [1] Even the thumbscrew cannot screw something out of nothing. The numerous official reports describing the social and political state of England, sent to Thurloe during the six or eight weeks after the momentary appearance of the Insurrection, bespeak, without exception, the complete absence of any trace of past or present disorder.[2] That the fidelity of the Army to the Protector was assured during the months that preceded the Insurrection Thurloe has borne witness (p. 28).

Returning to Cromwell's position on the 17th September, 1656, he knew that the men he was addressing were thoroughly acquainted with the state of England before, after, and during the Insurrection. Fully aware as a soldier and a man of sense of the sorry show made by the Insurrection,—keenly conscious of the insolent incredulity with which those "many members" had met his attempt to establish the genuineness of the Gerard plot,—the Protector, in effect, acknowledged that similar incredulity re-

[1] "Thurloe Papers," iii. 298, 356. [2] See Note F, p. 99

garding the Insurrection possessed the minds of his hearers. Having, by way of maintaining the uprightness of himself and his Government, scolded at the men who, losing their "honours and consciences," asserted that the rising at Salisbury was the work of "a company of mean fellows," that "it was a poor headstrong people, a company of rash fellows who were at the undertaking of this, and this was all"! the Protector thus gave way: "Therefore how men of wicked spirits may traduce us in that matter . . . I leave it." However, he began again on the same theme, and again broke down: "I doubt whether it be believed there ever was any rising in North Wales, or Shrewsbury, Rufford Abbey . . . Marston Moor, or in Northumberland and other places, where all these insurrections were at that very time."[1]

And the incredulity felt by Cromwell's hearers was quite as strong among their successors who sat in Richard's Parliament. By silence more expressive than words, they showed that in their opinion the Insurrection, and the cry of wolf at the door, the terror of the violent and bloody Royalists which Oliver so constantly kept up, were those "Necessities" which, as he tells us himself, the Lord Protector was accused of creating that he might make himself great, and "come upon the People with his argument of necessity."[2]

Richard's subjects were driven back on the troubles

[1] Carlyle, iv. 107, 108. [2] Carlyle, iii. 441, 443.

of the past by the anxieties of the moment, by the all-pervading dread of the Army, and of the return to power of those military dictators, the eleven Major-Generals (see p. 73). In such a discussion it might have been expected that the Insurrection would have stood foremost, for, as the late Protector had declared, it was "such a rising as that was" [1] which compelled him to instal the Major-Generals into their dictatorships: because, according to the wording of their Commissions, "the old malignant and popish enemies" had "designed a new and bloody war," and had "executed a general rebellion in many places." [2]

On the contrary the members of Richard's Parliament, frequently and impressively as they referred to the rule of the eleven dictators, never once even mentioned the Insurrection; and they wholly ignored the threat of danger from the King's adherents which that event might have been supposed to disclose. That they should have shown by their silence that they had no fear of the Royalists is the more remarkable because of the perilous state of the time; the fabric of the Government tottered; the man who had achieved the nearest approach to a real Protector was gone. If the Royalists had any capability for mischief, here then was their opportunity; yet on that score evidently there was no apprehension; [3] the Insurrection

[1] Carlyle, iv. 117. [2] "Cal. S. P. Dom., 1655," p. 344.

[3] The only approach made in that direction was Sir H. Vane's remark, 25th March, 1659 (Burton's "Diary," iv. 263): "The

was such an undistinguishable thing, that it was not worth the mention; nor had that event, in the opinion of those debaters, aught to do with the creation of the Major-Generals. The startling light which those discussions throw on the origin of that institution is dealt with hereafter (p. 73).

To return to Oliver's second Parliament, and to the reasonings prevalent among its members. Did the "men of wicked spirits" who traduced him by asserting that the Insurrection was not "real," restrict themselves to that conclusion? Would they not go on further? Even though they were ignorant of the "much conversation," with the Protector's "privity and allowance," between his soldiers and the Royalists, and of Rochester's "permitted escapes"; still they might easily perceive that such an artificial, questionable affair was brought about by deception, and to find the deceiver they would inevitably turn to Cromwell and his Government. This conclusion would carry on their reasonings yet further; for if the Protector's hand was in the Insurrection, he lied when he attempted to bolster up the Insurrection into a danger to the State; and he lied yet more appallingly when, in his "Declaration" on the occasion of "the late Rebellion," he maintained that because that occurrence showed that "nothing but the sword will restrain the late King's subjects from Blood and

end of the Major-Generals was good, the keeping down" the Royalists.

Violence" he had subjected England to the eleven Major-Generals.

Such a national fraud as was the Insurrection could not fail to work itself out in many unexpected directions; and this was one of the results of that event. As Cromwell's subjects could not charge the institution of the Major-Generals upon their peaceful neighbours the Royalists, and as he certainly would not of his own accord have shared out his authority as Chief Magistrate among his brother soldiers, it was manifest that the Army were the rulers not of the nation only, but of the Protector himself. This argument of despair pervades the history of the Protectorate; and if the pent-up rage and terror which that convincing, crushing exhibition of the power of the sword, the institution of the eleven Major-Generals, created during the years 1655 and 1656, is contrasted with the exhilarating hope and promise which 1660 brought to England, the raptures which hailed the Restoration are explained and justified.

An attempt will now be made to ascertain how far Cromwell's hidden ways were visible to his subjects. For this purpose the comments of a writer who narrates the history of his own time are effectually appropriate. The historian of the day bases his narrative on the public opinion of the moment. His comments, whether true or untrue, unquestionably reflect faithfully the talk which went on around him. The following statement by Philipps, in his continuation of

Baker's Chronicle down to the year 1660, is therefore positive proof that a widespread suspicion was rife among Cromwell's subjects that the insurgents of March, 1655, were "dancing in a net" spread for them by the Government.

The chronicler thus deals with that event, which, it may be noticed, he deemed a real danger to the State. "There was," he states, "a foundation laid by a combination of the courageously affected towards their Prince's service throughout the kingdom, authorised by a Commission from His Highness of a general rising for him in every county, which had not been so quickly and easily suppressed, had not Cromwell, sparing for no cost to maintain his instruments of deceit, for he had his spies ready hired not only here, but in all corners, such as counterfeiting themselves to be zealous Royalists insinuated into their councils and betrayed them, of which number Sir R. Willis, at last, became shrewdly suspected to be one."[1]

The notion that spies, acting under the Protector's instructions, were "in all corners" of the land was undoubtedly afloat whilst the Insurrection was being hatched; for on the eve of the outbreak, "within two miles of Frome in Wiltshire," a recruiting emissary, who was urging young men to join Penruddock's party, created such an unsatisfactory impression, that

[1] Philipps, "Continuation of Baker's Chronicle," p. 553. Cf. Heath, p. 358.

a wary youth declared that he was "confident this was a plot of my Lord Protector's own devising, and that he had some of his own agents in it to discern such as had a hand in the business."[1]

Philipps, though he exaggerated its dimensions, correctly attributed the overthrow of the Insurrection to the counterplotting agency of the Government; and thus, though unaware that the counterfeit Royalists were Cromwell's soldiers, and that he was the head "instrument of deceit," Philipps shows effectually that the Protector's subjects perceived that the attempt was completely under his control.

A brother chronicler was also guided by rumour into sympathy with a desire which the Protector would naturally entertain, that the outbreak should produce an effective show of the malignants up in arms, for Heath, in his description of the westward flight of the Salisbury insurgents, asserts that "Captain Butler with two troops of Cromwell's horse" kept "at a distance in their rear, to give them opportunity of increasing."[2]

This statement is somewhat inaccurate; Butler did not keep in the rear of the enemy; he diligently directed his horsemen against them; but still it shows that the Protector's fostering care over the Insurrection was visible to his subjects; and evidently sus-

[1] "Thurloe Papers," iii. 181, 182. Cf. Palgrave, "Oliver Cromwell, an Appreciation," p. 100.

[2] Heath, "Chronicle," p. 367.

picion was aroused by the obvious failure of Butler's efforts, for he wrote to the Protector from Salisbury on the second day after the event: "Now, my Lord, though I know it would be of sad consequence if we, assaulting them, should be worsted, yet, my Lord, I hope your Highness will easily pardon me, being I shall freely adventure myself upon God's good Providence. And, indeed, my Lord, I can't with any confidence stay here, nor look the country in the face, and let them alone." The notion that the flying Royalists could defeat four troops of the Protector's well-horsed, well-armed soldiers was absurd; so absurd that Butler might truly be unable to "look the country in the face, and let them alone."[1]

The observation bestowed on General Butler's movements shows how inevitably a widespread scheme of national deceit creates suspicious-looking circumstances, which in their turn create comment and criticism. Following that hint, an attempt shall be made to bring to mind the talk that went on in the streets of Dover and London soon after the Insurrection had sped its course.

An unavoidable feeling of uncertainty must beset an attempt to place ourselves among our fellow-countrymen of more than two centuries ago; but still, upon the certainties of human nature some reliance may be placed. If suspicious circumstances assert themselves, they provoke surmise, and surmise stimu-

[1] "Thurloe Papers," iii. 243.

lates discussion, especially among men whose minds are quickened by the touch of responsibility, by brooding apprehension, or by bitter disappointment.

Take for example the effect, and the resultant talk, produced at Dover during the previous February, not only amongst the Port authorities, but throughout the town, by the escape of Major Armorer, Broughton, and Daniel O'Neill. Discreet official silence was not observed about Armorer's slip through the fingers of the Port Commissioners. It became notorious that they had passed a highly malignant Malignant through the chief entrance gate into England, and that he was at large for mischief. Thurloe, indeed, found fault; and the Deputy Governor bewailed that "cross providence";[1] but the Port Commissioners could also perceive that the opportunity for the deception practised upon them by Armorer, with the help of the Passage Clerk, was created by that suddenly received and promptly revoked Commission, which enabled them to accept Day's false assurances that Armorer was a peaceful "marchant." That Commission was under the hand of the Lord Protector; still he might have been misadvised: but Thurloe, to say the least, had acted most unaccountably; and what were they to think about Day? He retained his post of Passage Clerk; swift expulsion from that important and probably lucrative post must have been looked for; but his conduct apparently excited no anger in Whitehall.

[1] "Thurloe Papers," iii. 164.

What interpretation also could be placed on the Mayor's "rash and inconsiderate act," the pass he gave to Broughton, and on the Governor's careless hold on his prisoner Daniel O'Neill? Whatever the officials and the citizens of Dover may have perceived in these successive occasions for surprise and talk, all pointing to some mysterious conclusion, we at least can see in these incidents a considerable likeness to Lord Rochester's "permitted escapes."

Even the degree of success which crowned the practices of the men "of the Army," the King's friends in show, Cromwell's friends "really," disclosed the origin of the underhand practices which brought about that result, and revealed the chief conspirator. The consequences wrought by the deception practised upon the Royalists were so far-reaching, so tragic, that attendant publicity was inevitable. They had been trepanned into death, distress, imprisonment, and shameful disappointment; and on England was inflicted the rule of the Major-Generals. Out of the fullness of wrath and resentment come outspoken accusation, reproach, and execration. The Army officers who pretended friendship to the Royalists were "many"; the men who had interchanged such friendly familiarity during January and February, 1655, met again, in all probability, during the summer and autumn of that year. If so, the past must have asserted itself amongst them by bitter accusation, or contemptuous rejoinders. Even if no such opportunity

arose for an outbreak of taunts and curses between the deceivers and the deceived, still Royalists and Royalists, disunited as they were, could not have remained wholly distanced from each other; and when the men who had warned their impetuous comrades, whilst they were inciting the King to action, that they would be trepanned, met together, recriminations and angry complaints must have ensued.

The sufferers also whose relations had been executed or enslaved would assuredly have turned against the men who had sent their followers to destruction; and they, to defend themselves, would urge that if many officers in Cromwell's Army offered to fight for the King, to refuse such a chance was impossible. That defence revealed the whole secret. If the method and the men whereby the Royalists were deluded came to light, it was evident that those soldiers must have carried on their sham-treason under the "allowance" of the Protector, their Commander-in-Chief. The accuracy of that opinion was undoubtedly visible to the men of "wicked spirits"; and although in those "treacherous days" it was not "safe to speak to any man," and even a hint that the Government invented the Insurrection might have been met by this reply,

> "who is so gross
> That cannot see this palpable device,
> Yet who so bold, but says he sees it not?"

still, even leaving out of account the Protector's tra-

ducers who would not believe his assertions that the Gerard and Vowel plot and the Insurrection were no fables, the Wiltshire countryman's remark that the intended Salisbury rising "was a plot of my Lord Protector's own devising" may be taken as a fair specimen of the talk of the time; and Colonel Cromwell's revelation regarding the deception played upon the Royalists by their pretended friends among the Army officers, the Protector's friends "really," shows that the hand which held the match, which fired the mine, which blew up the King's adherents, was visible to its subjects within six months after the explosion.

The Insurrection of March, 1655, not so much in the event itself, as from the circumstances which compelled Cromwell to join therein, and from the consequences that ensued, proved the turning-point in his career; and though on that account the view taken during his lifetime by his subjects of the Insurrection, and of the part he played therein, has much significance, of far weightier importance is the insight into the history of the Protectorate that can be derived from the opinions of Oliver's subjects when their tongues were set free by his death, and excited by the perils which beset Richard's Government.

"History is only intelligible if we place ourselves at the point of view of the actor who makes it." [1] That point of view may be afforded by the talk of the time;

[1] Morley, "Oliver Cromwell," p. 238.

and thus, aided by the debaters in the Parliament of 1659, we may endeavour to arrive at "the conclusion of the whole matter," and to solve the problem that underlies the career of "Oliver P."; namely the position in which the Army stood towards him, and he towards the Army, when he took the Chair in Westminster Hall on the 16th of December, 1653.

A research after that conclusion by a review of the Protectorate period, oscillating between the day of Cromwell's inauguration in December, 1653, and the offer of the Crown to him by Parliament during the spring of 1657, for both events were connected with the Insurrection of March, 1655, will close this inquiry into that "secret thing."

CHAPTER III

THE CAUSES AND CONSEQUENCES OF THE INSURRECTION

OUR effort after a solution of the problem indicated in the preceding chapter must begin with a reminder that the Insurrection was designed to serve as a pretext for the elevation of the eleven Major-Generals into their military governorships (p. 11). The Insurrection therefore differed in its object from those "conspiracies" which, according to the Venetian Ambassador, "the Government often invents to afford a pretext against the Royalists, and therefore to increase the Army and the Guards." Such was, as we are told by Cromwell himself, the popular belief regarding the Gerard plot (p. 54); and Sir Henry Slingsby was trepanned on to the scaffold to convince us that naught but the Protector's vigilance kept Charles Stuart, Popery, and foreign soldiers out of England.

Those conspiracies were invented for the Protector's benefit: the Insurrection was invented for the benefit of the Army. This being the case, as Cromwell, when he entered into partnership with those conspirators, must have known their object, surely he cannot have

done so willingly? Even if, under the compulsion of a real insurrection, Cromwell consented to share "the manage of the State" with his subordinates, to a man of his imperious make, to any ruler indeed, such consent would have been almost intolerable; still, if the appointment was unavoidable, and was recognised by the nation as unavoidable, the eleven Major-Generals might have been accepted by him, and perhaps by the nation also.

The use therefore of a notoriously sham Insurrection, as a justification for the creation of those Co-Protectors, must have been forced upon him by an overwhelming necessity; especially as, however submissive might be his subjects, it was a most perilous act of State policy. Although those eleven dictators did behave decently, their capacity for mischief excited acute apprehension and resentment. If they behaved indecently, despite Cromwell's 50,000 soldiers, a fierce outbreak of popular rage might have given him a severe shake; and as it was, though the Major-Generals gave no special cause of offence, the terror they created placed England at the feet of Charles Stuart.

That Cromwell acted under coercion when he parcelled out England into military provinces under the rule of the Major-Generals is unquestionable; nor can doubt arise regarding the men who were his coercers. That they were the Army officers, that is to say the Army, was loudly proclaimed by Cromwell (p. 13). Why and when they became his masters is accord-

ingly the object of our inquiry, and "the *why* is plain as way to parish church." Cromwell submitted to the Army men because in doing so he followed the natural bent of his disposition, because he obeyed the instinct which led him to adhere to those who were the strongest. Accordingly, when that "thing of dark omen happened," the seizure of the King at Holmby by Cornet Joyce, June, 1647, and it became evident that of the fabric of the State "the Army was the one thing now left standing," Cromwell accepted as his obvious duty the necessity of working with, or, if need be, of working under the Army. Division he felt might destroy even that all-powerful corporation; "only unity could save them," and "rather than imperil unity, he would go over to the extreme men in his camp, even though he might not think their way the best."

That in this course Cromwell followed his innate notion of statesmanship is rendered obvious by the searching examination into his conduct made by Mr. Morley, on the occasion when, for the first time, "military association" was used for "political ends," namely when "the general council of the Army at Putney in October and November, 1647, became a constituent assembly."

This occasion, as Mr. Morley shows, affords a "clear sight of the temper of Cromwell as a statesman grappling with the extremists in the Army." And what was the temper that Cromwell displayed? It was ex-

hibited by a series of "cumbrous" efforts on his part "to state the general case for opportunism," to justify by "balanced and hesitating phrases" the position of a time-server, of a man who guides his way by the "maxim that in yielding there is wisdom"; and thus, though he may "have felt the looming hazards of that maxim,"[1] submission to the Army was, sooner or later, Cromwell's inevitable fate.

When then did Cromwell become the absolute drudge of the Army? When did he consent to fulfil their determination to take an active and visible share in the Government of England, a determination which had possessed them as far back in time as the years 1645 or 1647 (p. 15). On that highly interesting question some light is thrown by the remarks of the members of Richard's Parliament; and to insist that they knew what they were talking about is needless.

To ascertain the time when Cromwell put it out of his power to refuse the demand of the Army to share with him in the Protectorship, we must, following the guidance of those debaters, go back to December, 1653, to Cromwell's acceptance of the Constitution drawn up by the eight Major-Generals, the document known as the Instrument of Government, popularly as the Instrument (p. 9).

The crisis which put Richard into the Protector's chair, and called his Parliament together, naturally brought to the front the past history of the Pro-

[1] Morley, "Oliver Cromwell," pp. 233-241.

tectorate; and the anxieties of the moment placed the debaters face to face with that notable proof of the supremacy of the sword, the institution of the Major-Generals. And naturally so; for Richard's subjects trembled under the terror of the Army, and were convinced that, although the rule of those military governors had been abolished, then about two years ago (p. 83), the Major-Generals might forthwith restore themselves to their Deputy Protectorships.[1]

An explanation of the source whence this terror sprang must be reached through a series of negative conclusions. For instance, the members of Richard's Parliament, in their survey of the past, did not ascribe the institution of the Major-Generals to Oliver, although he had claimed it as his "little poor Invention"; nor to the malignant Royalists who had, as he maintained, compelled him to undertake that work of "honest necessity"; nor to the personal ambition of the Major-Generals themselves.

The source to which the debaters ascribed the military despotism under which they had suffered was this. To judge by the expressions that they used, there was in their minds an inseparable connexion between the installation of those eleven military dictators and the Constitution which appointed Oliver to the Protectorship during December, 1653. As that scheme of Government was devised by eight Major-Generals (p. 9), the drift of thought that fact sug-

[1] See Note G, p. 99.

gested to Cromwell's subjects is obvious, namely, that as "the Instrument was made by the sword,"[1] the Protector also was made by, and therefore was the creature of the swordsmen. Thus guided they would perceive the force of the warning uttered by Richard's Solicitor-General, that the next turn in the revolution through which they were passing might compel them once more to submit "to the Major-Generals and the Instrument of Government."[2]

But not equally intelligible, at first sight, is the remarkable statement made by another debater, who asserted that "It is laid to the blame of the Instrument that Major-Generals came in upon it."[3] For assuredly, in the ordinary sense of the term, the Major-Generals did not come in upon the Instrument itself. Their appointment did not rest upon any sentence or clause in that highly constitutional-seeming document. It established the Protector and his Council; it prescribed the due call of Parliaments; and placed, by a clause drawn in terms of "studied vagueness," the power of the sword, to a certain extent, in the hands of Parliament, and of the Protector and his Council. The militia only, however, was affected by this provision, and "as nothing was said" therein of "the standing forces, it may be gathered that they would be under his," the Protector's, "own personal control."[4]

[1] Burton's "Diary," iii. 568. [2] Burton's "Diary," iii. 567.
[3] Burton's "Diary," iv. 16.
[4] Gardiner, "History of the Commonwealth," ii. 289, 290.

Thus far the Instrument did indirectly prepare the way for the institution of the Major-Generals. As the "standing forces" which composed the all-powerful Army were tacitly left under the Protector's "personal control," the influence which the Army might possess over their Commander-in-Chief was uncontrolled; and no protection was afforded by the Instrument to the Protector, or to the Parliament, or to the Nation, against the overwhelming supremacy of the Army. The Protectorship was also made by the Instrument an elective, not an hereditary office; a provision which paved the way for the successorship of another military commander, of another Chief Magistrate, who, following Oliver's example, was willing to take the chair as the instrument of the Army (see p. 78).[1] Negatively, though very assuredly, therefore, it might be asserted of the Instrument that "it was made by the sword, and by the sword it must be maintained,"[2] that it was designed to maintain the supremacy of the sword. The Instrument also, by the articles which empowered the Council of the Protectorate to exclude from Parliament such members as they might deem unqualified, effectively subjected Parliament to the power of the

[1] Feb. 11th, 1657, Titus to Hyde: "As officers of the army, the Major-Generals oppose a successive government, and keep the election of their governor in themselves," Clarendon State Papers, iii. 327.

[2] Burton's "Diary," iii. 568.

sword, for of the Council "one half were soldiers."[1] Thus the Army kept the control over the State quite sufficiently in their own hands; and the supremacy of the military corporation was left untouched. Endowed with power to choose a second Protector, and to mould Parliament to their liking, the government of the sword was effectively maintained by the Instrument of Government.

The statements that "I hope we need not fear coming to the Major-Generals again";[2] that if the fabric of the Government was overthrown, "we must go to the Major-Generals and the Instrument of Government";—and that the Major-Generals "came in upon" the Instrument, were made with all the full publicity of parliamentary debate, without the slightest challenge, and were accepted without explanation. If those words were intelligible to their hearers, they must be, to a certain extent, interpretable; and so, as undoubtedly the Major-Generals did not come in by means of the Instrument, the debaters must have meant that the Major-Generals "came in," not because of, but together with, *i.e.*, at the same time as the Instrument, by the political action, that is to say, which gave that document operative force.

If that be so, the assertion that "it is laid to the blame of the Instrument that the Major-Generals came in upon it" is seemingly a delicate method of

[1] Firth, "Oliver Cromwell," p. 371. Cf. Palgrave, "Oliver Cromwell, an Appreciation," p. 183. [2] Burton, iii. 568.

indicating Cromwell's responsibility in the matter; for the action which brought the Instrument of Government into actual being, which gave it governing force, was his inauguration in Westminster Hall on the 16th December, 1653. If therefore the Major-Generals came in under the same transaction, the Army men must have determined that Cromwell should, in course of time, share with them the rule which they conferred upon him, before they, acting through the eight Major-Generals, submitted the Instrument to him for his acceptance. That being the case, was Cromwell, when he seated himself in the Protector's Chair, and took the oath "to execute justice according to law for the good of the Commonwealth,"[1] pledged "to cantonise the nation, and prostitute our laws and civil peace to a power . . . too great to be bound within any law,"[2] by the appointment of the Major-Generals?

It would seem that he was so pledged. For if any meaning can be assigned to the assertion that the Major-Generals "came in upon" the Instrument, the Army Corporation must have made themselves sure of Cromwell before they allowed Lambert to induct him into the Protectorship; and Cromwell, for his part, must have given an undertaking that, using the words he addressed to the Hundred officers, he would obey the Army when they "thought it was necessary to have Major-Generals."

[1] Gardiner, "History of the Commonwealth," ii. 291.
[2] Burton's "Diary," i. 315.

The way whereby the deception that stimulated the Insurrection was set on foot also shows that the deceivers were sure of Cromwell's co-operation when required. For it was the Army officers, according to Clarendon, who started the Royalists on the road to ruin (p. 25); and as the Insurrection created the opportunity for the installation of the eleven Deputy Protectors, the Army officers were evidently working in that direction on their own account, and not under Cromwell's instructions. It was without his "privity," therefore, that they sent their emissaries who pretended that "they did hate Cromwell" among the Royalists; and yet without some sanction these men would not have dared to play the part of traitors of the worst type, of soldiers faithless to their standards. They must have acted with the approval of their superior officers, who in their turn gave their approval, knowing that their Commander-in-Chief would, when called upon, join with them.

The sight of Cromwell accepting the Protectorship under the Instrument of Government, as the servant of the Army, attests the absolute truth of his scornful, remorseful declaration to the Hundred Army officers that "they had made him their drudge upon all occasions"; and as this spectacle discloses to the full his utter subjection to the Army, it forms an appropriate introduction to a consideration of the method whereby he sought to set himself free.

The door of escape was opened to him by that

other party in the State, by that odd man in the affair who had been left out of account by the Army and by Cromwell, namely the English Nation. The representatives that they returned to Parliament, 17th September, 1656, were, although the Army men had done their utmost to mould the assembly to suit their purposes, "so highly incensed against the arbitrary actings of the Major-Generals,"[1] that they were determined on their overthrow. To that end the co-operation of the Protector was essential; for he was the only authority who could evict the Major-Generals from office. If he would do so, Parliament accordingly, by the document known as the Petition and Advice, offered to confer upon him a parliamentary title to his rule, with power to name a successor; provision also was made for the call of Parliaments, consisting of Lords and Commons, free from external control; and as the parliamentary Constitution created by that statute would of necessity supersede the sword-created Instrument, both the Protector and England would be, so far, set free from the supremacy of the Army. To obtain that result effectually Parliament was also resolved, if possible, to compel Cromwell to accept the Crown.

Although it is obvious that some negotiation of this kind between Cromwell and Parliament must have prefaced the introduction of the Petition and

[1] "Clarke Papers," iii. 91. Cf. Firth, "Cromwell and the Crown" ("English Hist. Review," July, 1902, pp. 429-441).

Advice and carried it through Parliament, contemporary evidence to that effect is serviceable, and it is supplied by a remark made by a member of Richard's Parliament. Discussion then, as always, turned on the terrors of the time, and into despairing disparagement of the Constitution under which they sat, the form of Government which was created by the Petition and Advice. Whilst that topic was uppermost this remark was made: "It is said you have gained by this bargain," *i.e.*, the Petition and Advice, "in putting down the Major-Generals."[1] The meaning of those words, "this bargain," was evidently clear to the hearers: if so, they must have known that, as it takes two parties to make a quarrel, at least two bargainers are wanted in a bargain; and that the two, on this occasion, could not be any other than the Protector, who alone could put down the Major-Generals, and the members of Parliament, who were able to found his authority upon a statute, and to bestow on him the Crown.

Was the acceptance of the Crown part of the bargain? That possibility, or rather probability, will be subsequently considered. The essential part of the bargain, the Protector's undertaking to put down the Major-Generals, shall be disposed of. The session had sat about three months when an occasion arose which forced him to show that he had entered into this compact with Parliament; and the crisis was created

[1] Burton's "Diary," iii. 588.

by the Army men. Their object in the summons of that Parliament, and, as the Protector reminded them, "impatient were you till Parliament was called,"[1] was akin to the object on which Parliament was bent. For whilst Parliament sought by means of a statutory Constitution the overthrow of the Major-Generals, they desired to obtain a parliamentary title to their Dictatorships, and thus to establish by law the ascendency of the sword. Both these ends were united together. The Army men justly perceived that the more the Government was founded on a basis outside the law—"in force," to use the phrase of the time—and the further was Cromwell's rule "removed from the natural foundation which the people in Parliament are desirous to give him,"[2] the more certainly would the Army be able to continue their domination after his death by placing in the Protector's Chair another military successor.

In the race for supremacy the military members of Parliament were first in the field. On Christmas Day, 1656, Major Disbrowe stood up in the House and said: "I have a short Bill to offer you for the continuance"[3] of the whole machinery, by the decimation tax and otherwise, of the rule of the Major-

[1] Burton's "Diary," i. 384.

[2] Goodkin's "Letter anent the Decimation Bill," 27th Jan., 1656 ("Thurloe Papers," vi. 20).

[3] Burton's "Diary," i. 230. Cf. Palgrave, "Oliver Cromwell, an Appreciation," p. 192.

Generals. If that bill became law, Parliament and the Protector were powerless; it must be opposed; and the Protector was forced to show his hand. He entered into the conflict on the side of Parliament. He conspicuously used the influence of his family to compass the rejection of the Major-Generals' bill; and his son-in-law, Lord Claypole, divided the House, though in vain, against its introduction.

So the bill was brought in, though its further progress underwent a remarkable amount of obstruction. Towards that end, whether intentionally or not, the Protector made this effectual contribution. The first reading of the bill was set down for the next sitting day, the 26th December; but to no purpose. The Protector interposed; he sent to Parliament a letter demanding of them "the grounds and reasons how you proceeded without Our Consent"[1] in the sentence they had pronounced on the mad fanatic James Nayler, inflicting on him, as a blasphemer, the whip, the pillory, and the branding iron. As Nayler had been scourged from New Palace Yard to the Old Exchange seven days before Cromwell sent that message to Parliament, the letter filled the members' minds with angry perplexity. There was Nayler with his flayed shoulders; and there was the Protector's letter on the table of the House. Why, if he objected to their sentence, had he delayed interference until eight days after the sentence had been put in operation?

[1] Burton's "Diary," i. 246.

The message accordingly was treated by Parliament as a thing of naught. Nayler's forehead was branded on the following day; and the Protector's letter was, after several days' debate, tossed aside unanswered.

Parliament correctly interpreted the letter as a challenge to their jurisdiction: and that was Cromwell's object. He wished to convert the cruel treatment of Nayler into an exhibition of the evils of a single-House Parliament, into a step onwards towards the restoration of the House of Lords.[1] The immediate effect of this device was, however, the provocation of angry, tumultuous debate, which degraded Parliament, depreciated the Instrument of Government, and cast insult on the Protector; and it pushed also the first reading of the Major-Generals' bill some days onward into the next year. The end came at last. Members of the Protector's family again appeared among the opponents of the bill, which was rejected on the 29th January, 1657, after "a very mettled and serious debate," by 124 votes cast against 88.[2] And "the power of the Major-Generals . . . was, on the hint of his Highness himself, to the joy of constitutional England withdrawn."[3]

Services rendered in return for value promised or

[1] Cf. the Protector's Address to the Hundred officers, Burton's "Diary," i. 384.

[2] Burton's "Diary," i. 311, 320. Cf. Palgrave, "Oliver Cromwell, an Appreciation," pp. 192-207.

[3] Carlyle, iv. 147.

received are in themselves positive proof of a bargain. Could proof be clearer of a bargain between Parliament and Cromwell than the services, to him most perilous, which he had rendered towards the rejection of the Major-Generals' bill? Although he was a man "of a sanguine complexion, naturally of such a vivacity, hilarity, and alacrity, as another man hath when he hath drunken a cup too much,"[1] he might well feel overwhelmed by the heavy task he had undertaken. He had helped to defeat the cherished object of the Army, the bill by which they hoped to establish their rule for ever. He had made a complete breach between himself and the men who, on his own confession, had hitherto overmastered him. Surely he would not have committed himself so deeply if he had not before him the safe refuge of a throne? To a King even the Army must submit.

Thus of necessity the acceptance of the Crown was involved in the bargain between Parliament and Cromwell. For the moment he had gained; so far he had fulfilled his part; the rejection of the Major-Generals' bill was, in effect, the first reading of the bill styled the Petition and Advice, which called him to be King over the Three Nations. This then was his position. He had broken the bargain which procured him the Protectorship. Could he carry out the bargain with the members of Parliament by obeying their call? They saw the difficulty that beset him. So

[1] Richard Baxter, "Life and Times," ed. 1696, p. 57.

determined were they that he should, as his sole security for success, become King Oliver, that they inserted in the Petition and Advice this most stringent provision: "In case Your Highness shall not be satisfied to give your Consent to all the matters and things in this humble Petition and Advice, that then nothing in the same be deemed of force to oblige the People of these Nations in any the particulars therein contained."[1]

This proviso was designed to stiffen the Protector's resolution. In vain, as the end showed; and it gave to the Army men a most inopportune opportunity. If they could force Cromwell to convert the Petition and Advice into a nothing, by making him refuse that thing the Crown, Parliament in despair and disgust might drop the Petition and Advice; and the Army men nearly succeeded. Cromwell's final refusal, that convincing proof that, though Parliament had done its utmost, he was for ever the drudge of the Army, so disheartened Parliament, that when it came to the conclusion of the transaction, to the passing the Petition and Advice, with Kingship left out, only a majority of three—53 votes against 50—carried the question on which was founded the resolution that Cromwell be Lord Protector of the Commonwealth.[2]

The members of Parliament might well despair. They were defrauded of the Kingship—the sole remedy

[1] Burton's "Diary," i. 395, 401, 419.

[2] May 22nd, 1657. "Com. Journal," vii. 537.

for the disorders of the State—and the Protector was the defrauder. He had led them on by joining with them in throwing out the Major-Generals' bill; and Parliament had worked and struggled for over two months to fulfil their share in the bargain; and then in the end he failed them. And Parliament knew that it was no democratic theory, nor fidelity to the "Good old Cause," which urged the Army to extort from Cromwell that last act of drudgery. It was because "Sword dominion is too sweet to be parted with"; because, in Baxter's words, "a King did seem intolerable to those that would be Half Kings themselves," that the Army compelled Cromwell to drop the Crown.

To bring upon himself that act of bitter humiliation, Cromwell had plunged into depths of discredit. He had exhibited himself to his subjects, to Parliament, and to the Army as "a double-minded man"; and they knew that "a double-minded man is unstable in all his ways." He had approved himself to be a great dissembler; and they may have anticipated Mr. Morley in his opinion, that "it is the worst sort of politicians that are the great dissemblers."[1] The Hundred officers had heard him, when he charged against them that they "would have Major-Generals," justify their demand and his obedience, by attributing the institution of the Major-Generals to "the late general insurrections"; although they knew that it was with his "privity and allowance," that they had

[1] Morley, "Oliver Cromwell," p. 26.

brought about those insurrections. He had rejoiced before Parliament over "the erection of the Major-Generals"; he had declared that they had done more "towards discountenancing of vice and settling religion than any thing done these 100 Years"; and then, although the Major-Generals had discharged their duties in an altogether decent fashion during about a year and a half, he joined with Parliament in the rejection of their bill; thus showing his concurrence in the arguments on which it was opposed, namely that the provisions of the bill were contrary to the principles of common justice and fair dealing between man and man. Then he turned round once more, and sided with the men who sought to establish their sway by legislation based on injustice; and he placed England once more under the yoke of the Army.

His shifty ways pursued after him. Though his second Protectorship was founded on a statute; though he ruled no longer as nominee of the Army, but had received his authority from Parliament; of what account was a Ruler called to power by three voices? The supremacy of the sword was as supreme as ever; and as a sign of the time it may be noticed that, according to the opinion of his subjects, Cromwell sought to propitiate the Army men by enabling them "to lord it over us," by seating in his House of Lords a group, about fourteen in number, of Generals, Lieutenant-Generals, and Major-Generals who com-

manded "22 or 23 regiments, divers garrisons, and the Tower of London." [1]

The conditions under which Cromwell held the Protectorate compelled him to pile deception upon deception, the crowning deception, though in effect it uncrowned him, being that national fraud the Insurrection of March, 1655. To hinder his subjects from perceiving that he ruled them not in their behalf, but as drudge of the Army, he sought to "acquire merit" by exhibiting himself as the saviour of society. To use the words of two of his subjects, he conjured up "at pleasure some terrible apparition of agitators, levellers or such like, who . . . shall affright the people to fly to him for refuge"; [2] and he "provided for his security by making the most of all plots and designs whatever"; [3] and by trepanning Sir Henry Slingsby on to the scaffold.

These experiments upon the feelings of his subjects were played out and passed away; but the phantom Insurrection set him on the downward path which led him into such low estate, that even Mazarin took pity on him. On the 13th of February, 1658, Lockhart wrote to the Protector from Paris: "the Cardinal desired me to tell your Highness that your enemies threaten you with invasions from abroad, and

[1] Burton's "Diary," iv. 11, 31.

[2] Richard Baxter, "Life and Times," p. 70.

[3] Philipps, "Continuation of Baker's Chronicle," p. 561. Cf. Guizot, "Commonwealth," ii. 133.

insurrections at home," and "offers to assist your Highness at his own expense with 6 or 8,000 men, for whose fidelity and zeal for your service he will answer."[1] The Cardinal was a diplomatist; as matters then stood Cromwell was in no immediate danger; but evidently the conditions which surrounded him justified this exhibition by Mazarin of his considerate and friendly anxiety.

The Insurrection of March, 1655, and its results, also worked evil to the Army men. They experienced the failure that springs from the demand of the overmuch. The Protectorship did not in the end serve their turn any more than it served Cromwell's. Had they been contented to act under King Oliver and King Richard, judging by the look of things, they might have "lorded it" over England in the Upper House, and in State offices for some, perhaps for a considerable space of time; and certainly when they struck the Crown out of Oliver's hands, they struck a blow which brought about the Restoration of 1660.

The disgrace, contempt, and misery that Oliver Cromwell brought upon himself by his enslavement to the Army may seem impossible to those who have admired the bright, firm face lighted up with the flush of victory, and the flash of strong resolve, as revealed by Cooper's miniature. But, on the other hand, they should recall to mind the likeness of the

[1] "Thurloe Papers," vi. 802.

Protector by the sculptor Bernini. The features of Cromwell, as impressed upon the marble, though the bust is shaped upon the lines of Cooper's miniature, quiver with impotent rage, suspicion, and alarm, with emotions which befit a Samson in bonds, striving to loose himself in vain.

The delineation also of the Protector's features by the brush and the chisel reveals an underlying coarseness of aspect. The nature of the man was thus far truthfully portrayed. Commanding as was his personality, his intellect was of a commonplace texture. His was a martial, not an all-round genius. He conquered men, scolded men, drove them to and fro, but to lead them upwards was beyond his power. Raised as he was head and shoulders above his fellows, his judgement, his view of life was not on a higher level. He was thoroughly a soldier among soldiers. Hence arose alike his strength and his weakness.

For instance, had he acted on a loftier standard of thought, had he possessed a nobler cast of mind than his brother officers, he would not have joined with them in an unworthy attempt to degrade their brave comrade, Major-General Overton, who, as Milton tells us, distinguished himself "in that memorable battle of Marston Moor," and was bound to him "during many years in a friendship of more than brotherly closeness and affection, both by the similarity of our tastes and by the sweetness of" his "manners."[1]

[1] Masson, "Life of Milton," iv. 602.

It is to Colonel Hutchinson that we owe the following disclosure of the dealings of the Army officers, and of Cromwell's also, towards Major-General Overton; and though the Colonel was strongly biassed against Cromwell, the story can hardly be an invention.

During the year 1649, "some of the Army being very desirous to get" Colonel Hutchinson "among them," moved Lord Fairfax to offer him military employment; and the Colonel chose the government of the town and garrison of Hull, "thinking they had not offered him anything but what had fairly fallen to their disposal. Soon after this, the Lieutenant-General Cromwell desired him to meet him at a Committee, where, when he came, a malicious accusation against the Governor of Hull was violently prosecuted by a fierce faction in that town. To this the Governor had sent up a very fair and honest defence; yet most of the Committee" laboured to cast him out. "Colonel Hutchinson, though he knew him not, was very earnest in his defence; whereupon Cromwell drew him aside and asked him what he meant by contending to keep in that Governor? (it was Overton). The Colonel told him, because he saw nothing proved against him worthy of being ejected. 'But,' said Cromwell, 'we like him not.' Then said the Colonel, 'Do it upon that account; and blemish not a man that is innocent, upon false accusations, because you like him not.'" Then Cromwell explained

that "we would have" Overton "out, because the Government is intended for you." Hutchinson indignantly refused to be a partaker in such a device, and "so eagerly undertook the injured Governor's protection," that Overton was "confirmed in his place." [1]

If Colonel Hutchinson's example had been followed by Cromwell, very probably he would not have been his Highness, the Lord Protector; but, as would have been far better, he would not have become the drudge of the Army; he would not have been forced into "vile participation" with the knaves who tempted the Royalists into the Insurrection of March, 1655; and there would have been no occasion for his sad avowal, made on the 31st March, 1657, that "I have lived the latter part of my age in,—if I may say so,—the fire, in the midst of troubles." [2]

Has not the truth of Oliver Cromwell's "famous saying that 'he goes furthest, who knows not where he is going,'" [3] been proved to the full? Whilst, on the one hand, when he accepted the Protectorship as the instrument of the Army, he might not have been able to discern how low he could sink down into the depths of degradation; on the other hand, undoubtedly he

[1] "Memoirs of Col. Hutchinson," Bohn's ed., p. 340.
[2] Carlyle, iv. 180.
[3] Morley, "Oliver Cromwell," p. 356.

could not have foreseen that the most conspicuous of his acts of drudgery, the institution of the eleven Major-Generals, would have been to him an occasion of rising to the height of exaltation conferred upon him by the offer of the Crown.

The earnest, reiterated entreaties made by Parliament to Oliver Cromwell to be King over our Three Nations is as amazing a mark of confidence, of trust in man, as may be found in the world's history.

Parliament, on Cromwell's own showing, disbelieved his solemn assurances, and regarded him as a "grand artificer of fraud"; and yet, on the other hand, the members of Parliament by those reiterated appeals proved that they unhesitatingly accepted his declarations that he had at heart "the peace and quiet of these Nations";[1] that he became Protector "out of a desire to prevent mischief and evil—imminent evil";[1] and that "there is not a man living can say I sought it; no, not a man nor woman treading upon English ground."[1] They therefore felt assured that, if he was delivered from the sway of the Army, they might unreservedly commit themselves to his faithful care. And so, in the thought of this, the only touch of consolation which befell the Protector, we may appropriately bring to a close the gloomy story of that marvellous man, who sold himself to his Army, and brought upon himself untold misery and evil, in order that he might save England from anarchy and ruin.

[1] Carlyle, iii. 422; iv. 220, 221, 365.

APPENDIX

Note A, p. 30

CLARENDON does not mention the name of the member of the Sealed Knot who, in the early part of 1655, became Cromwell's spy; but the spy unquestionably was Sir Richard Willis. He was the only known traitor in that Committee; and the description given by Clarendon ("Autobiography," ii. 30) of the impression made by Willis on the Marquis of Ormond during his visit to London, February, 1658, and Clarendon's account of that occurrence ("History," Book XVI., p. 931, ed. 1839), point conclusively to the same man.[1]

Note B, p. 31

It may be urged that the description given by Clarendon of the Insurrection of 1655, in his History of the Rebellion, in effect contradicts his all-important statement that Cromwell knew of, and therefore approved, the offers made by his officers of devoting their services to the King. According to the History, Cromwell had no hand in the matter; nor had the Army officers. The Insurrection arose of itself out of a widespread belief that, so pervaded were

[1] Cf. regarding previous attempts to fix the time when Willis became traitor, Palgrave, "Oliver Cromwell, an Appreciation," p. 90, note 1.

his soldiers with faction and division, "Cromwell durst not draw the whole Army to a general rendezvous, out of apprehension that when they should once meet together, he should be no longer master of them." If that had been the case, if, as Clarendon avers, the soldiers abhorred Cromwell, and he was aware of their practices, instead of sanctioning the offers of help to the Royalists from his officers, he would have made short work with those traitors, and there would have been no Insurrection.

The essential difference that exists between the two statements made by Clarendon regarding that event can thus be accounted for. The statement charging Cromwell with complicity in the temptation which his officers placed before the Royalists was written by Clarendon towards the close of his life, in an autobiography which he penned solely for the information of his children, and, to use his words, "not for a public view." The History of the Great Rebellion, on the contrary, was intended for the public view; he therefore sought to impress on his readers a belief in the sagacity and audacity of the Royalists. He dwells at length on the "bold enterprise," the seizure of Salisbury, and asserts that such an exhibition of audacity was to Cromwell "a prodigy of fear," an amazing proof of the general "distemper of the kingdom, and in his Army." Such a picture of the Insurrection could not contain any reference to the Protector's "crooked ways." (Clarendon, "Hist.," ed. 1839, p. 873.)

Note C, p. 33

Morton, who met Rochester at Margate, may have been a Government agent. Letter to Thurloe from Thos. Peerce, 22nd June, 1655, reporting that he "was to hasten Morton to follow their business," etc.: "Thurloe Papers," iii. 573.

NOTE D, p. 38

Wilson's Letter to Thurloe regarding Armorer ("Thurloe Papers," iii. 164).

"HONOURED SIR,

"Your's I received this evening, as also that dated upon Saturday last, and am very much troubled (and have beene ever since the receipt of your's upon the Lord's day) at Wright's being released, especially considering that particular bloudy designe you mention.

"Sir, I confesse I wrote not immediately to your selfe or the councell, of having this Wright in custody heere, but I presume the governor did let you understand so much, I giveing an account unto him constantly of every person that came over, and whom I secured, and this Wright among the rest, about a weeke agoe, and that which gave me the jealousye to secure him, which was a desire to returne backe from whence he came, and speedily to returne hither (as he pretended) on his merchandizinge affaires from Rotterdame; whereupon I told him, he gave me a just ground for suspition, and that I would secure him, untill I returned his name and carriage, whereat I perceived a trouble of spirit upon him, therefore was the more carefull of him; but upon the Commissioners receipt of that commission from his highnes, that Wright amongst the rest, (I being not then present with the Commissioners, nor they knowing any thing against him, that gave them ground of suspition, and the said mr. Day whom in your last you mention) ingageing for him, and signifieinge to the Commissioners his knowledge of him (as the Commissioners told me, after I had shewed them your's dated Saturday last, of which they were very sorry and sensible) was released. I wish with all my

heart I had beene there, but there was a crosse providence therein. . . . Sir, I shall let the gentlemen understand, what his highnes pleasure is in relation to the revokeing of his last order to them, and I shall improve my utmost care and diligence to observe the contents of the former order, and to let you receive a constant account of all persons, which are to be staid and secured, as that order directs and injoynes. . . . I remayne,

"Honoured Sir, your's faithfully to serve you,

"THOMAS WILSON.[1]

"Dover Castle, Feb. 21.
"1654."

NOTE E, p. 43

The safe return from England to the Continent of the Royalists sent over to further the Insurrection of March, 1655, is noteworthy. About twelve in number, not one was apprehended, although some of them, especially O'Neill, Armorer, and Lord Rochester, remained in London until

[1] Though Wilson does not mention the day on which the Port authorities acted on "that commission from his Highness" under which Armorer was released, they obviously did so on Friday, 16th February, or Saturday, 17th, as Armorer was in London on Sunday the 18th. Thurloe must therefore have dispatched "that commission" to Dover at latest on Friday the 16th. London is seventy-two miles from Dover; Thurloe's messenger, if he started at noon, might easily reach Dover between nine and ten o'clock of the same day. The date of the revocation of H.H.'s "last order," *i.e.*, "that commission" which set Armorer free, is also not given. But as Wright refers to the revocation in his letter of Wednesday, 21st February, the revocation must have been issued on any day between Saturday the 17th, and Tuesday the 20th February.

the following May and June; although Manning informed Thurloe of the places where they might be found; and Bradshaw and others warned him that Day, the Passage Clerk, was a rogue, and that he and Forster, another Port official, were passing the fugitive Royalists through Dover (Thurloe, i. 695; iii. 358, 428, 530, 532, 561, 659; "Cal. State Papers, Dom., 1655," 193).

Note F, p. 56

References to the reports on the state of Devonshire, Bristol, Gloucester, Hereford and Worcester shires, Oxford, Hampshire, Dorsetshire, Norfolk, Chester, Shrewsbury, Colchester, etc., during March and April, 1655: Thurloe, iii. 223, 246, 248, 253, 265, 281, 284, 290; "Cal. State Papers, Dom., 1655," 84, 88; Vaughan's "Protectorate," i. 151.

Note G, p. 73

References to the statements made by members of Richard's Parliament, 27th January-22nd April, 1659, expressive of the terror they felt of the Army and the Major-Generals:

Colonel White, 7th February: "It is dangerous to swerve from fundamentals. Witness Major-Generals" (Burton, iii. 116).

Mr. Bodurda, 8th February: "If there be a breach or rupture now . . . Major-Generals may return with a breach in the City and the Country" (Burton, iii. 136).

Colonel White, 14th February: "Notwithstanding the great obligation and tie of that oath," the oath taken by Oliver when installed Protector, 16th December, 1653, "we had many impositions upon us no way consistent with it;

witness the Major-Generals . . . with power to confiscate men's estates, banish Englishmen . . . and put them into imprisonment and bonds. This indeed was executed by honest men" (Burton, iii. 265).

Sir George Booth, 28th February: "I have heard that some of them," the Army officers in the House of Lords, "have taken strange things upon them, as Major-Generals, to meddle with difference of *meum* and *tuum*. There have been such persons in this Nation, in military employments, that have told men that the Law was in their own breasts" (Burton, iii. 527).

Sir A. Haselrigg, 1st March: "After this," the Instrument of Government, "came the Major-Generals. I hope we need not fear coming to Major-Generals again" (Burton, iii. 568).

Mr. Stephens, 4th March: "We have found by experience the mischief of the sword. The little fingers of the Major-Generals have I found heavier than the loins of the greatest tyrant kings that went before" (Burton, iv. 11).

Mr. Scot, 5th March: "If I may say plainly, your passing bell is a ringing. It is said, you must either return to Major-Generals, or admit this Government," the Petition and Advice, "and, farther they are in, how will you get them out? If so, you must fight them" (Burton, iv. 35).

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